

The Influence of Folk Music in Three Works
by Béla Bartók: Sonata No.1 for Violin and
Piano, Sonata (1926) for piano, and
'Contrasts' for violin, clarinet and piano.

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ABSTRACT

It is well known that the compositions of Béla Bartók are influenced by folk music. Until recently, however, musicologists in the West have treated this aspect of Bartók's music superficially. By avoiding the folk music influence, their analyses are based on a partial knowledge only of Bartók and consequently, the conclusions they make are severely limited. The purpose of this study is to delve deeply into the folk music influence on Bartók's compositional style and to take full account of his ethnomusicological knowledge when analysing his music. In order to do this, I have limited my study to three of Bartók's works, *Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano* (1921), *Sonata* (1926) for piano and *Contrasts* for violin, clarinet and piano (1938). These compositions were chosen for three main reasons: first, there is only a relatively small amount written about them to date; second, they represent three different periods in Bartók's creative life; third, they exhibit a rich variety of folk music sources, not only in terms of genre or nationality, but also in terms of the degree or level of influence.

The study is in two parts, together with an introductory section. Part One is concerned with the direct influence of folk music on Bartók's compositions and includes the imitation of folk genres, vocal and instrumental, and a variety of regions or nationalities. In the works under study, Hungarian folk song is the most prominent resource; this also reflects its foremost position in Bartók's total output. Although of secondary importance, the instrumental repertoire and idiom has a significant role in all three finales from the *Violin Sonata*, *Piano Sonata* and *Contrasts*. A separate chapter is devoted to the *verbunkos* idiom in *Contrasts*, a type of Hungarian art music with roots in folk music. A chapter on the possible influence of the peasants 'sound-world' on Bartók's style concludes Part One. This term describes the peculiar tonal qualities which Bartók experienced in folk music. In addition, a section looks at 'mistakes' in the performance of folk music, and Bartók's imitations of these in his compositions.

In Part Two, the indirect influence of folk music is discussed. This concerns general features of Bartók's style - melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm and form - features that derive from his knowledge of folk music but which do not imitate specific genres or idioms. From intensive analysis of the works under study, it can be concluded that Bartók's mature compositional language is pervaded with aspects of folk music. This mature language is well displayed in the *Piano Sonata* and *Contrasts* (although there are stylistic differences between these two), but in the *Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano* (the earliest of the three), a dichotomy still exists between the elements of folk music and art music.

In reaching this conclusion, it has been necessary to take into account non-folk influences in Bartók's music. It has also been essential to examine other theoretical approaches, especially as they pertain to the works under study. Although some concepts and terminology have been adopted from other analysts, I have chosen to work mainly from the music itself rather than follow a particular method of interpretation.

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GUIDE TO THE TEXT

Abbreviations

Certain sources are referred to frequently in the course of this thesis.

Consequently, an abbreviated form of their title has been adopted throughout. The abbreviations are:

Béla Bartók Essays, ed. Benjamin Suchoff. London: Faber and Faber, 1976 = *BBE*.

Bartók, Béla *The Hungarian Folk Song*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981 = *HFS*.

Bartók, Béla *Rumanian Folk Music*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.

Volume 1, Instrumental Folk Music = *RFM 1*

Volume 2, Vocal Folk Music = *RFM 2*

Volume 4, Christmas Carols (*Colinde*) = *RFM 4*

Volume 5, Folk Music from the county of Maramureş = *RFM 5*

Lampert, Vera *Bartók Népdal-feldolgozásainak Forrásjegyzéke* [The Folksong Sources for Bartók's Arrangements]. Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1980 -
In the headings for musical examples where items from this publication are cited, they are referred to in the following manner: *Lampert no. x*

Other words or phrases to be abbreviated are as follows:

first movement	= I
second movement	= II
third movement	= III
fourth movement	= IV
fifth movement	= V
bar	= b. (B. at the beginning of sentences)
bars	= bb. (Bb. at the beginning of sentences)

In some cases, the letters 'MH' and 'F' appear prior to a number when referring to folk music items; these indicate the number of the phonograph recording and original transcription.

Citation of Titles

The full titles of the works under study appear in abbreviated form throughout this thesis, except when referred to within a quotation. The abbreviations are:

Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano = *VSI*

(also referred to as 'Violin Sonata No.1'; the title used in the Universal edition of this work is 'Première Sonate (en 3 mouvements)', the first of 'Deux Sonates pour Violon et Piano'; this work was marked 'op.21' in the original manuscript, but this was omitted from the published version.)

Sonata (1926) for piano = *PS*

(also referred to as 'Piano Sonata' or 'Sonata for Piano'.)

Contrasts for violin, clarinet and piano = *Contrasts*

The citation of other compositions by Bartók and works by other composers has been by the title by which these compositions are most commonly known.

Use of Italics

Italics are used in this study for titles of compositions, works of literature and non-English words or phrases which are not part of the standard musical or bibliographical terminology. Titles and non-English words or phrases which appear in quotations are one exception to this rule; in this case, they appear in the form in which they appeared in the original quotation.

References to Scores

Sonata no.1 for Violin and Piano (VS1) - passages in this work are referred to by the rehearsal numbers of the Universal Edition. For example, 5[3] means 5 bars before figure 3; [4]2 means the second bar after figure 4 ; 6-1[3] means the passage from six bars to one bar before figure 3 ; 2[2]-[2]3 means the passage from two bars before figure 2 to three bars after it, and so on. The rehearsal numbers may be referred to by themselves; thus, [2] means the bar in which this figure appears, [1]-[4] means the passage between figures 1 and 4.

Sonata (1926) (PS) - No bar numbers appear in the Universal Edition of this work; the bar numbers referred to here are my own.

Contrasts - the bar numbers of the Boosey and Hawkes edition of this work are used.

The term, 'theme' is used to denote a passage of music, including all parts. This is not to be confused with 'melody' which is used for a single line only. For example, theme 4 in *PS*, I refers to the melody and harmonisation together; the quasi-folk tune or melody from this theme appears in the right hand of the piano.

References to folk items

Where folk songs are cited, the words are omitted for convenience, except when a photocopy of an original transcription is used. When Bartók imitates strophic folk song in the works under study the phrases that make up the strophic structure are referred to as 'lines', as distinct from an authentic folk song in which the song-lines are not imaginary.

Headings for musical examples

The headings for musical examples give the name of the composer (if any), the title of the composition or folk item from which the extract comes, and the location of the extract. Extracts from Béla Bartók's compositions are referred to by title only; the composer's name is omitted. The term 'reduction' means the normal layout of the score has been reduced to a lesser number of staves (usually into a 'piano' score). Alterations or simplifications to the score made in the extracts (for the purpose of facilitating analysis) are indicated in the heading. In all examples written by hand, transposing parts (e.g. clarinet in A) are written as they sound (at pitch). Double-barlines in a musical example indicate the ending of an extract or analytical statement; they can, however, also assume their normal musical sense depending on the context.

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AIMS OF THE STUDY

When the initial idea of writing a thesis about the influence of folk music on Bartók was formulated, it was my intention to examine a large body of his works, such as the instrumental works. At the time, my knowledge of the folk aspect in Bartók's music was probably that of an average music student - minimal. I envisaged making a thematic catalogue of folk melodies or melodies similar to authentic models from the works I was to study. The first modification to this aim came with the realisation that Bartók's creative output is strictly divided into two main areas: arrangements of authentic folk melodies, and 'abstract' works which do not contain authentic folk melodies, but in which imitations of such melodies may occur. The decision was then made to pursue the 'abstract' works and to study the various levels of folk music influence in them.

Upon arrival in Hungary in October of 1983, my plans underwent a second major modification. On the expert advice of the László Somfai, the Head of the Béla Bartók Archives in Budapest, I narrowed my topic to the study of three of Bartók's works, *Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano (VS1)*, *Sonata (1926) (PS)* and *Contrasts*. There were three main reasons for the choice of these works: first, there was only a relatively small amount of literature about them; second, they represent three different periods in Bartók's creative life; and third, they display a wide variety of folk music sources, not only in terms of genres or nationalities but also the degree or level of influence. I intended to study both the imitation of folk music genres and the absorption of folk music elements into Bartók's abstract style. Therefore, the decision was made to divide the thesis into two parts, the first dealing with what I have termed the 'direct' folk music influence (imitation of genres) and the second dealing with the 'indirect' folk music influence (absorption of folk elements into Bartók's pitch organisation, rhythm and form). In this way, I could concentrate more fully on the different aspects of the material in the works under study without having to explain everything at once. It also allowed more immediate comparison between the specific aspects of folk influence in the works under study; for instance, the various genres of folk song

employed in themes from *PS* and *Contrasts* could be viewed in close proximity without being cluttered by analysis of other aspects of these themes. The 'direct' and 'indirect' areas sometimes overlap but as far as is possible, the duplication of material is avoided.

The basic aim in the analyses of *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts* was to find out how and to what extent Bartók's music is influenced by folk music. In order to do this, familiarization with his ethnomusicological sources was essential. Because of the huge size of Bartók's folk collection and his knowledge of other collections, I had to rely to a considerable extent on the guiding opinions of musicologists (and Hungarian musicologists, in particular) experienced in this field. Various themes and passages in the works under study were examined for their direct connections with possible folk models. In some cases the correlation was obvious and simply required a detailed elaboration of the different characteristics involved. However, frequently Bartók's quasi-folk themes are deliberately distanced from their sources making it more difficult to establish specific links with folk music. Moreover, the folk sources themselves are often complex and various in their characteristics. Consequently, some of the conclusions made are open-ended; without further proof, from Bartók's hidden manuscripts for instance, definite conclusions are sometimes impossible to make. To simplify the area of 'direct' folk influence, it was decided to divide it into two main sections: one dealing with the imitation of vocal genres (Chapter 1) and the other dealing with the imitation of instrumental genres (Chapter 2). These constitute the bulk of Part One.

As well as considering folk influences, it is important to bear in mind possible non-folk influences (at the direct and indirect level), especially with a composer as eclectic in spirit as Bartók. This point became more and more apparent as my study proceeded, and particularly as regards *Contrasts* which makes reference to an Hungarian popular art music tradition, which also has roots in folk music. It was felt necessary to include a separate chapter (Chapter 3) on this aspect of *Contrasts* in order to clarify the somewhat complex nature of this source.

A further chapter was added to Part One to encompass two special areas of folk music relevant to Bartók's music: first, the influences of the tone-quality of peasant music

performance, described by the term 'sound-world'; and second, the imitation of seemingly accidental features in peasant performance, described by the term 'mistake-imitations'. My resolution to write about these previously unexplored areas was prompted by my experience of Bartók's original folk music recordings, to which I had access during my stay in Budapest. Chapter 4 is, however, no more than an opening of these subjects. They are still very much open-ended to the author's way of thinking, and considerably more research would be required before definite conclusions could be made about them.

Whereas Part One is concerned with specific sections or passages, Part Two involves a full analysis of the works under study. This is because the 'indirect' influence of folk music may affect all aspects of the score, from melodic lines and harmonisation to the structuring of movements. The organisation of pitch content is studied in Chapters 5 to 7, the works being separated to allow particular features to emerge in their overall context. This was felt preferable to working under general chapter headings (such as 'Harmony in the Works under Study'). The procedure adopted in this thesis permits a sustained and in-depth account of the various influences without the need to constantly relate the findings back to a general point or idea. In music such as Bartók's which is rich in variation and sources, we need as much flexibility as possible in our analytical approach to do justice to the findings. Although this study limits itself basically to the aspect of folk music influence, where it is felt necessary the analysis diverts into non-folk areas.

The approach to each work or movement differs according to the specific needs of the music. The language of some movements is more fully imbued with folk elements than others. Although it is not the chief purpose of this thesis, comparisons between the folk influence in the works under study are made at various stages and are summarised at the end of Chapter 7. This helps us to observe, in part at least, Bartók's development of a folk-based style. In this, we have another reason for the bringing together of *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts* in one study; the points of comparison can be clearly made because of the similar nature of the genres in these three works. All of them are instrumental pieces in three movements, with the basic pattern of fast-slow-fast, and they share similar forms: sonata form, ternary form, and rondo (or sonata-rondo) form.

By comparison with the pitch analysis, a general approach is taken for the aspects of rhythm and form. They are, by nature, less complex and easier to describe in general terms than melody, harmony and tonality. However, they are no less significant. It is my feeling that the indirect folk influence of rhythm and form on Bartók's music are two areas of research that are worthy of greater attention than has been given to date.

There is a large amount of literature about Bartók's music. The literature that has influenced my thesis most is discussed further on in this Introduction, following the 'Historical Background'. I have adopted various methods and terminology of established Bartók-musicologists, but I have also endeavoured to work as much as possible from the music, itself, without external preconceptions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is not the purpose of this 'Historical Background' to provide a complete summary of Bartók's life and work. This task has been performed several times over, most recently by Paul Griffiths in his book entitled *Béla Bartók*, and most concisely by Somfai and Lampert in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. To avoid wearisome repetition of the generally known facts about Bartók, the author intends to focus on those portions of his career which concern the three works under study, *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts*.

As was stated in the 'Aims of the Study', the works under study come from three different periods in Bartók's creative life. *VSI* (1921) was written at the peak of his 'expressionist' stage, when his melodic and harmonic language approached atonality. It was coupled with another sonata for violin and piano, written in the following year, which maintained the same style but offered alternative compositional solutions. Following *Dance Suite*, (1923), Bartók composed only one piece in the three years from 1923 to 1926,¹ concentrating more fully on his work with various folk music collections. This is one of several breaks in Bartók's creative career. In this case, changes in his compositional thinking were taking place, resulting in a new style manifested in the piano works from 1926 (the 'piano music year'). *PS* belongs to this group of works and thus represents Bartók's new style, which was more firmly based on folk music than before. The twelve years between *PS* and *Contrasts* (1938) encompass Bartók's most well-known works, including *String Quartet Nos. 3, 4 and 5*, *Cantata Profana*, *Piano Concerto No. 2* and *Music for Percussion, Celesta and Strings*. These years also contain another three-year gap in creative output (1932-34),² continued and strenuous ethnomusicological activity as well as a busy schedule of concert performances and tours. Somfai identifies a further change in style following *Music for Percussion, Celesta and Strings* (1936), with a move away from

¹ This work was *Falun* [Village Scenes], a setting of Slovakian folk songs for choir and piano (later orchestrated), written in 1924.

² During this time, Bartók arranged six songs from the Székely region and transcribed some of his earlier folk arrangements.

'constructivism' and towards 'human idealism', where the music is less strictly organised.³ Changes in Bartók's use of folk music also marked these years, as we shall see in the chapters that follow.

Therefore, an historical survey of the works under study will of necessity cover a large and significant chunk of Bartók's career. In the course of this survey, the ethnomusicological aspect requires more thorough attention; with respect to this, we will deal with a larger period of Bartók's life, beginning with his discovery of folk music in 1904. There are two main reasons: (1) despite the considerable amount written about Bartók, there still remains a general ignorance about the details of his folk music activities and sources, and (2), as Bartók's ethnomusicological activities between 1904-1918 had a lasting influence on him, they must feature prominently in any discussion of folk music influence in his compositions. A summary of the ethnomusicological details follows the general historical background of *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts*; in this way, Bartók's folk music activities can be placed in context with his writing of the works under study.

The three years between the end of World War I and the composition of *VSI* were a turbulent time for Bartók. His native country had sided with Germany in the war and the result was a disaster; Hungary not only lost many thousands of people but also was severely diminished in size, areas such as Transylvania where Bartók collected folk music becoming part of Rumania and the northern part of the country going to Czechoslovakia.⁴ In addition, there were political upheavals after the war, with the formation of a Republic of Councils for just four months in 1919, followed by the return to conservative rule under Admiral Horthy. As Bartók writes, Hungary was in a state of "complete political and economic breakdown".⁵ The general conditions of music and musicians in Budapest after the war were documented by Bartók himself in a series of articles for foreign journals, covering the period 1920-

³ Somfai and Lampert, entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* v.2. Ed. Stanley Sadie (U.K., Macmillan Publishers, 1980), p.217.

⁴ See Appendix 1, map of pre- and post-World War I Europe. The division of Hungary resulted from the Treaty of Trianon in 1920.

⁵ BBE, "Autobiography", p.411.

1921.⁶ He describes the "grave disappointment" of the Socialist and Communist rules as regards the organisation of musical activities, and the "conservative reaction" that followed, in which leading musical figures such as Dohnányi and Kodály were removed from their posts and artistic freedom was severely restricted. The post-war situation prevented Bartók from continuing his collecting of folk music in the annexed parts of Hungary. Even in 1921, Bartók could neither afford the time nor money to resume collecting, much to his distress.⁷

And even today conditions are not such as would allow us to think of continuing our studies in musical folklore. They are a 'luxury' we cannot afford on our own resources. Political conditions are another great impediment. The great hatred that has been worked up makes it almost impossible to carry out research in parts of countries that once belonged to Hungary. Journeys to faraway countries are out of the question...

At the same time however, Bartók's career as a composer had begun to flourish after a period of self-imposed exile dating from 1912. The change started in 1917 with the success of his ballet, *The Wooden Prince*, enthusiastically conducted by Egipto Tango, and the first performance a year later of his only opera, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (1911). In a letter written in 1919 to the Minister of Culture requesting leave of absence for his ailing colleague, Kodály was able to refer to Bartók as "our most eminent composer, with a reputation throughout Europe".⁸ If this was perhaps an overstatement at the time, designed to persuade the Minister, Kodály's words very soon proved to be prophetic. In the next few years, interest in Bartók and his music grew rapidly, so much so that in a letter dated a few months prior to the composition of *VSI*, Bartók wrote:⁹

⁶ See *BBE*, "Post-war Musical Life in Budapest to February, 1920", pp.460-3, "Musical Events in Budapest, March-May, 1920", pp.464-6, "Musical Events in Budapest: October 1920 to February 1921", pp.471-3, and "Musical Events in Budapest, March-June, 1921", pp.479-80. The original journals in which these articles appeared are listed in the Bibliography of *BBE*.

⁷ *BBE*, "Autobiography", p.411.

⁸ *Béla Bartók Letters*, ed. Demény (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p.143.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.153-4.

Yet at this moment my compositions are arousing interest abroad. In November I was the subject of a 12-page (approx.) article in a London music periodical in which the writer placed me in the ranks of the world's great composers, not merely the greatest living composers of all times. The most important musical journal in Paris, the *Revue Musicale* also had a nice, 10-page article about me in March; and two other English periodicals and an Italian one will also be writing about my works. I am negotiating my own articles with 1 Italian, 2 English, 1 French and 2 American musical journals. The best of the music periodicals printed in German (it is actually Austrian), the *Anbruch* of Vienna, published a whole 'Bartók' number

The 'whole 'Bartók' number' refers to a special edition in honour of Bartók's fortieth birthday which appeared in *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, in 1921.

After the completion of *VSI*, Bartók's fame continued to spread with concert tours to London and Paris, where he met various leading composers such as Stravinsky, Ravel, Szymanowski, Milhaud and Poulenc. More articles followed, and the newly formed ICSM (International Contemporary Society for Music) promoted performances of his works.

All this resulted in a gradual improvement in Bartók's finances and living circumstances in Budapest. At the time of the letter quoted previously (1921), however, conditions were not at all comfortable. Due to his low salary as a piano teacher at the academy, he was forced to spend a great deal of time earning extra money playing concerts and writing articles for journals, as well as preparing his books on folk music. Bartók and his family could not afford a flat and were staying with friends in Budapest. The effect of this on his composing is shown in the same letter: "...I have no time for composing, even if I were in the right mood for it. But my mood is far from right - and no wonder."¹⁰ These circumstances should be borne in mind when studying *VSI*.

Bartók's contacts with violinists were of significance in the composition of *VSI*. As Kárpáti states, Bartók's post-war concerts usually included the combination of violin and piano. This was because of the great strength of the young Hungarian school of violinists at this time, with Imre Waldbauer, Joseph Szigeti, Zoltán Székely and Ede Zathureczky and others all being pupils of Jenő Hubay. From March to November 1921, these concerts included performances of Debussy's *Violin Sonata* in G minor with Székely, Ravel's *Piano Trio* with Waldbauer and Kerpely (cello), and Szymanowski's *Mythes* with Székely. The

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.153.

last of these was performed while Bartók was working on *VS1*, if we go by Kroó's dates.¹¹ (Its influence on Bartók's composition shall be discussed later.) However, it was another product of the Hubay 'school' for whom both of the violin sonatas of 1921-22 were written and dedicated - Jelly Arányi.

Bartók had known Jelly Arányi and the Arányi family since 1902 when he visited their home and played some chamber music with them. He enjoyed the Sunday afternoon party so much that he composed a small piece for the oldest of the three Arányi daughters, Adila (also a violinist), entitled *Andante*.¹² The Arányis refused to speak German, the official language of the day, which impressed Bartók, as did their connections with Joachim; their anti-semitism he found harder to understand.¹³ The Arányis eventually settled abroad, but when Jelly and Adila visited Hungary in 1921, the acquaintance with Bartók was re-established. Jelly states that she herself requested Bartók to write a work which she could perform. Macleod's description of Bartók's response to this request makes interesting reading:¹⁴

He [Bartók] had the themes in his head next day, and would have told her at the Danube steamer, if he had been more sure of himself after so long a silence. While writing it, he kept imagining with what *élan* she would play the *allegro* first movement, how beautifully her *cantilena* would be in the *adagio*, and with what *fuoco barbaro* she would play the exotic dance rhythms in the third movement.

He had written it entirely for her, he said, and if she couldn't or didn't play it, then he would never play it.

Although this seems a little highflown, Macleod may well have received this version from Jelly Arányi herself. (The source is not acknowledged.) However, by November 9, 1921, Bartók had written the first two movements and wrote to Arányi to inform her. His letters to Calvocoressi at this time also reveal the composer's admiration for Arányi's performing abilities. Calvocoressi, a lifelong friend of Bartók, was helping to organise Bartók's tour

¹¹ Composition of *VS1* occurred between October and December of 1921; See Kroó, György, *A Guide to Bartók* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974), p.106.

¹² This little piece has been published in facsimile, under the title *Andante (1902)*, by Editio Musica Budapest, with a commentary by Somfai.

¹³ See Kárpáti, 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music 4* (Hungaroton SLPX 11655), p.8, and *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.19.

¹⁴ Macleod, Joseph *The Sisters d'Arányi* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969), p.136.

of the U.K. (for 1922). With regard to the performance of *VS1* and other violin-piano pieces, Bartók wrote, "...If I should have to play violin-piano music in England, I would naturally prefer to do so together with Miss d'Arányi, since it would be extremely difficult to find another suitable violinist..."¹⁵ His admiration for Arányi did not stop at her violin playing abilities, however. Macleod rather awkwardly relates that Bartók fell in love with her, probably prior to writing *VS1*.¹⁶ It appears that he wanted to divorce his wife and marry Arányi but this wish was not reciprocated by Arányi. Although there was some strain in their relationship as a result of this, they continued to perform music together until 1923 (the year Bartók did divorce his wife and remarried Ditta Pásztory, a piano pupil of his). *VS1* was not unaffected by these events as we shall see.

As things turned out, neither of the violin sonatas was first performed by Arányi, despite being written especially for her. *VS1* received its first performance by Mary Dickenson-Aurer (violin) and Eduard Steuermann (piano) in Vienna, on February 8, 1922. It was on Bartók's tour of England, on March 14 of the same year, that he and Arányi first played it together. The occasion was a private concert at 18 Hyde Park Terrace, the home of the Hungarian *chargé d'affaires*; both Jelly and Adila Arányi performed, along with Bartók at the piano. Bartók was surprised by the extent of media coverage he received, as we can see from a letter to his mother:¹⁷

It's quite astounding that my first private recital (March 14th) has had so much space given to it in the press; *The Times* devoted a second article to it ... It is quite something that the papers are treating my coming here as some exceptional event. I would really never have hoped for this.

A more widely-attended public performance of *VS1* was given by Bartók and Arányi on March 24, in the Aeolian Hall in London. Over twenty music critics were present and in their reviews they concentrated mainly on the sonata. Opinions ranged from the very negative ("The bulk of the sonata seemed to me the last word (for the present) in ugliness

¹⁵ Kárpáti, *op. cit.*, p.8. Also see Somfai, L.-Gombocz, A., "Bartóks Briefe an Calvocoressi (1914-1930)", *Studia Musicologica* v.24, 1982, pp.199-231.

¹⁶ Macleod, *op. cit.*, p.139.

¹⁷ *Béla Bartók Letters*, *op. cit.*, p.158.

and incoherence") to the constructive and comprehensive (specifically M.D.Calvocoressi's analysis).¹⁸

From London, Arányi and Bartók travelled to Paris where the Sonata was performed on April 8, in the presence of the contingent of prominent composers mentioned earlier. At the supper afterwards, put on by the French musicologist Prunières, Bartók's new composition and Arányi's playing were enthusiastically applauded. Milhaud and Poulenc both wrote letters of congratulations to Bartók, the former finding *VS1* "a pure, noble work of great weight [*de race, pure et rude*]"¹⁹ Prunières wrote a lengthy article on the work in the *Revue Musicale*, the same journal that had published an article about Bartók by Kodály, the year before.

The *Second Sonata* for violin and piano (1922) was also performed widely, and was included on Bartók's second visit to England in 1923. The composition of a work in the same genre so soon after *VS1* is not surprising in terms of Bartók's output. As Kárpáti shows, he had a tendency to produce pairs of works, as if he were wanting to offer two different solutions to the problems inherent in a particular genre.²⁰ We can see this approach in the first and second *Orchestral Suites* (1905-07), two sets of five songs (*Öt Dal*), op.15 and op.16, the third and fourth *String Quartets* (1927-28), the two *Violin Rhapsodies* (1928) and others.

It is paradoxical that Bartók's rise to fame should be associated with the composition and performance of the violin sonatas, which are among his most inaccessible works. Since those heady days in the 1920s, these sonatas have not been as frequently performed as most of Bartók's mature works, *VS1* rarely being attempted by violinists. Their initial impact is probably partly due to the atmosphere of experimentation in composition (and the Arts, generally) at the time. After the early shock-waves produced by

¹⁸ The quotation is from a review in the Sunday Times of 26 March, 1922 ('The Week's Music') by Ernest Newman - See Malcolm Gillies, *Bartók in Britain: A Guided Tour*, ch.3, draft version, p.17. Calvocoressi's analysis is discussed in the same chapter, pp.19-20.

¹⁹ Kárpáti, *op. cit.*, p.9.

²⁰ Kárpáti, *Béla Bartók Kamarazenéje* [Béla Bartók's Chamber Music] (Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1976), p.274.

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and various works by Schoenberg and his followers, there followed a stream of unconventional pieces in which new-found melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and tonal resources were tried out. Bartók's interest in the new trends in contemporary music is very evident, not only in his compositions prior to 1921, but also in the articles written in 1920-21 (such as "The Problem of the New Music"²¹) and in the types of pieces he performed in concerts.²² In this context, the interest generated by the appearance of an adventurous work such as *VS1* is understandable.

Paul Griffith's comment that "... the sonatas turned out to be a cul-de-sac at a bewildering cross-roads" is not without foundation.²³ As is well known, Bartók himself thought he was approaching a sort of twelve-tone music but ultimately rejected it. If there was a definite point of rejection of the atonal trend, then it occurred after the composition of the sonatas when his style became more and more pervaded by the influence of folk music. It was this influence which prevented Bartók from embracing atonality, as he explained in 1928:²⁴

...our peasant music, naturally, is invariably tonal,... (An 'atonal' folk music, in my opinion, is unthinkable.) Since we depend upon a tonal basis of this kind in our creative work, it is quite self-evident that our works are quite pronouncedly tonal in type. I must admit, however, that there was a time when I thought I was approaching a species of twelve-tone music. Yet even in works of that period the absolute tonal foundation is unmistakable.

Even as early as 1924, Bartók commented in a letter to a conductor who was rehearsing *The Wooden Prince* : "...my music is always tonal".²⁵ However, it is not certain whether this comment refers exclusively to *The Wooden Prince* or to Bartók's music in general.

²¹ See *BBE*, p.455.

²² See, for instance, the programme for a Bartók concert from April 23, 1921, which includes Debussy's *Preludes*, Schoenberg's *Drei Klavierstücke*, op.11, and Stravinsky's *Piano Rag Music* and the cycle of *Four Russian Songs*. See *Documenta Bartókiana* v.5, ed. Somfai (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1977), "Faksimiles und Photographien" no.16.

²³ Griffiths, *Bartók* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1984), p.100.

²⁴ *BBE*, "The Folk Songs of Hungary", pp.338-9.

²⁵ *Béla Bartók Levelei* [Béla Bartók Letters], ed. Demény (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), pp.311-12. Translation by Malcolm Gillies, who brought this quotation to my attention.

Although he speaks freely about the use of atonality in the articles of 1920-21, it would appear his definition of that term was broader than we would accept nowadays

Following the success of his tours to England, France and Germany, Bartók proceeded to give recitals in other parts of Europe, including Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Italy and Holland. The international acclaim he received enhanced his reputation in his own country, although attacks were still mounted against him for being "un-Hungarian".²⁶ One of the results of the recognition was the commission to write *Dance Suite* (1923), in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest. As we saw earlier, between *Dance Suite* and 1926, Bartók composed very little; in addition to his ethnomusicological work, however, he orchestrated *The Miraculous Mandarin* and maintained his teaching duties. If the Press interview of November 13, 1924 (quoted in Ujfalussy's book) is accurate, Bartók's desire for composing had been temporarily quashed by threats made against him during rehearsals of his works. Moreover, Bartók divorced and remarried in 1923, and his second son was born the following year. These events must also have occupied his time considerably.

By the time Bartók came to compose *PS* (1926), his public and private circumstances had stabilized. His international reputation both as a composer and pianist continued to grow, bringing with it greater financial security. His work as an ethnomusicologist was rewarded by the publication of *A magyar népdal* (HFS) in (HFS) in

Domestically, life was more settled. All these factors seem to have had some effect on the types of works he produced in 1926, quite aside from stylistic influences. These works (including *PS*) are less turbulent and emotional (although still tough in idiom compared with later works) and seemingly more carefully constructed than *VS1* and other works of this time.

In 1926, at the end of the year's teaching commitments, Bartók's family went to stay with his sister for a holiday.²⁷ Bartók remained in Budapest so as to compose

²⁶ József Ujfalussy, *Béla Bartók* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1971), p.212.

²⁷ For the information in this paragraph, I am indebted to Somfai's 'Commentary' to the facsimile edition of *PS*, entitled *Sonata (1926)*, Editio Musica Budapest, 1980.

^{27b} *A magyar népdal* was translated into English, as *Hungarian Folk Song*, in 1931.

uninterrupted, with the chief intention of writing a piano concerto. He felt the need to replenish his piano repertoire for public performance, as most of his piano compositions dated from the previous decade. Before starting on the concerto, however, he made a large quantity of sketches for solo-piano pieces. From these sprang the *Out of Doors* suite, the *Nine Little Piano Pieces* and the *PS*, as well as the *Piano Concerto* - hence the name frequently applied to this year in Bartók's career, the 'piano music year'.²⁸

In his 'Commentary' to the recently published facsimile edition of the second draft of *PS*, László Somfai provides a comprehensive account of the order in which the various sketches and drafts appeared. Movements from both *PS* and *Out of Doors* were composed during June 1926, possibly in the following order:

1. *PS* I - first draft.
2. *Out of Doors* - "With Drums and Pipes", "Barcarolla" - first drafts.
3. *PS* III (+ "Musettes" as bagpipe episode) and *PS*, II - first draft.
4. *Out of Doors* "The Night's Music", "The Chase" - first draft.
5. Second drafts of the above pieces, with the order of movements in *PS* finalised.

At the end of June, Bartók joined his family for a month's holiday and travelling, before returning to work on these pieces and make a start on the *Piano Concerto*. A draft of the Concerto was produced in August, while the finale of *PS* was shortened by the removal of the 'bagpipe' episode and surrounding *ritornelli*. This episode then became the third movement of *Out of Doors* and was given the title "Musettes". Having settled on the final form, Bartók premiered *PS* along with movements IV and V of *Out of Doors* on December 3, (1926) on the Hungarian Radio, and subsequently performed it at the Liszt Academy on December 8. It was published by Universal Edition in April of the following year, with the date of composition added to the title at the suggestion of the publisher - hence the full title of the work, *Sonata (1926)* for Piano. This work was an important ingredient of his concert

²⁸ *Ibid.*, and also see Somfai's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Piano Music* 8 (Hungaroton SLPX 11338).

programmes during his American tour of 1927-28, and was also played in a concert of the Baden-Baden Deutsches Kammermusikfest on July 16, 1927, where Berg's *Lyric Suite* also was played.

The piano works of 1926 represent a turning point in Bartók's style, a move away from the Romantic-type gestures and textures in *VS1* towards greater economy of means and greater simplicity. In an interview in 1941, Bartók said "I myself, I believe, have developed in a consistent manner and in one direction, except perhaps from 1926, when my work became more contrapuntal and also more simple on the whole".²⁹ However, the use of counterpoint is not so apparent in *PS* as in other works (such as the *Nine Little Piano Pieces*). In another interview, from the 1940s, Bartók speaks of the development of a "bone and muscle" style of piano music, describing again the concentration on bare essentials and the stripping away of unnecessary ornament.^{29b} This stylistic change was undoubtedly influenced to some extent by the neoclassical trend in European music at the time, although Bartók never indulged in musical quotation or the parody of old Western styles of music and firmly rejected the 'objectivity' of Stravinsky.³⁰ No matter how externally tough or carefully constructed these compositions were, Bartók always maintained a belief in the ability of music to be expressive. A notable instance of this is his reply to a questionnaire about the tonal quality of the piano (from 1927): "...its [the piano's] inherent nature becomes really expressive only by means of the present trend to use the piano as a percussion instrument".³¹ Another influence on Bartók's new style, and related to the Neoclassical trend, was his interest in pre-classical keyboard music, stimulated by the desire to find concert pieces away from the mainstream repertoire. In addition to playing Domenico Scarlatti and Couperin, Bartók edited and performed early Italian sonatas, toccatas and polyphonic pieces by Rossi, Pasquini, Della Ciaja, Marcello and Zipoli.³² He discovered in this music a refreshing clarity of texture, economy and an

²⁹ Friede F. Rothe, "The Language of the Composer: An Interview with Béla Bartók", *The Etude* (Philadelphia) no.59 (1941), pp.83, 130 (p.130).

^{29b} The expression, "bone and muscle" was used by Bartók when discussing his *Piano Suite* op.14 (1916). The interview in English was from the 'Ask the Composer' concert, held in New York 1944. See *Bartók Record Archive*, ed. László Somfai, János Sebestyén and Zoltán Kocsis, p.26.

³⁰ See Stravinsky's *Autobiography* (London: 1975), p.53

³¹ *BBE*, "About the 'Piano' Problem (Answer to a Questionnaire)" (1927), p.288.

³² See Somfai and Lampert, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* bibliography, p.223.

emphasis on counterpoint, as well as some interesting pitch simultaneities (with examples of bimodality).

However, the stylistic change in 1926 is not as sudden as it might seem. The comparison between *PS* and *VSI* somewhat exaggerates the differences between these two periods in Bartók's creative output. As far as his piano writing is concerned, we can find several examples of the anti-Romantic, "bone and muscle" style before 1926. Two immediate forerunners are the piano version of *Dance Suite* (1925) and the piano part for *Village Scenes* (1924) where there is a paring down of figuration and decorative elements. The piano part in the finale of *VSI* also occasionally displays these features. We can go back even further than this, to the *Suite*, op.14 for piano (1914), *Allegro Barbaro* (1911) and even some of the *Fourteen Bagatelles* for piano (1907). It is only in the works from 1926 onward, however, that the new style is consistently maintained.

Despite the various influences of Western art music, Somfai writes, "More profoundly than ever, the roots of his melos were linked to folk music".³³ The extent to which this statement is true will be the subject of discussion in the ensuing chapters.

In the English edition of Bartók's published letters, János Demény (the editor) describes the period in Bartók's life from 1927-40 as "the height of his career".³⁴ We may ask why 1926, the year Bartók resumed composing after a break, was not given as the starting point for this new period. Demény views the works from 1926 as "the preparation for the great synthesis", the synthesis presumably referring to Bartók combining of folk music and art music resources. There could be some truth in thinking that such a synthesis had not yet been achieved. For example, some of the more deliberately contrapuntal movements or passages from these works (such as the "Four Dialogues" from the *Nine Little Piano Pieces*) may be perceived as being incompatible with the folk music elements. In *PS*, however, there is a thorough integration of the various influences into a unified whole, as we shall see. (Perhaps this is partly due to the relatively small amount of counterpoint in this piece.) Taking into consideration the maturity of this work, and *Out of*

³³ Somfai, 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Piano Music*, p.6.

³⁴ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.179.

Doors, it is difficult to justify the separation of Bartók's creative activity in 1926 from that of the years directly following.

Contrasts appears towards the end of this period, along with a cluster of well-known works: *Music for Percussion, Celesta and Strings*, *Violin Concerto 1937-38*, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, *Divertimento* and *String Quartet No.6*. The synthesis of folk and non-folk elements was complete in these works. Although he was still heavily involved with transcribing folk music and preparing ethnomusicological publications in the 1930s, it was many years since he had collected items himself. It is important to remember this when considering the type of inspiration Bartók might have received from folk music at the time of writing these works.

Demény isolates the final five years of Bartók's life, when the composer exiled himself and his family in the U.S.A. These years have come to be generally known as the 'American years'. However, the changes in Bartók's circumstances do not parallel the stylistic changes in his music in this case, despite another period of creative silence between 1940 and 1943.³⁵ As has been suggested already, Bartók's late style evolved as early as 1937, and the composition of the *Violin Concerto*, and continued through to his final works. Therefore, *Contrasts* belongs to the beginning of a new stylistic era in Bartók's music, as was the case with *PS*.

This stylistic change was briefly described at the beginning of this 'Historical Background'. More specifically, his music became less rigorously organised, a little less contrapuntal, less formally controlled and more spontaneous in its sense of progression. Melodically, there is more lyricism, harmonically, there is greater consonance and use of traditional triadic resources. In an interview from 1938 about contemporary music, Bartók said "All efforts ought to be directed at the present time to the search for that which we will call 'inspired simplicity'. The greater the number of those [composers] who will dedicate themselves to that, the more will disarray be avoided."³⁶ From this, it is also evident that

³⁵ This break in Bartók's composing was caused by the problems of adapting to a new life in the U.S.A.. See Agatha Fassett, *The Naked Face of Genius* (Boston, 1958).

³⁶ "Béla Bartók's Opinion on the Technical, Aesthetic and Spiritual Orientation of Contemporary Music", *BBE*, p.516.

Bartók saw economy of means as an important aspect of expression, although there is nothing new in this with regard to his music prior to 1938. However, the term 'inspired simplicity' is one that seems applicable to many of Bartók's themes and ideas in these later works. Although some critics have described several of these works as 'light',³⁷ there are also darker moments than in any of Bartók's previous compositions (save, perhaps, some of Bartók's dirge-like movements from early in his career) - the slow movement of *Divertimento*, for instance, or the *mesto* sections from *String Quartet No.6*. The expressive contrasts are greater than before. There is both an exuberant extroversion and despairing introversion, plus a whole range of moods between these extremes.

Contrasts is typical of this new trend, as the title of the work partly suggests. It is all too easy to dismiss it as an entertainment piece, commissioned by a jazz musician and written to show off two virtuoso performers, as exemplified by the 'pot-boiler' finale. However, even this last movement is tempered by a wistful, lyrical middle section, while the second movement, deceptively entitled "Pihenő" [relaxed], is sinister and brooding in mood. The first movement, too, has an element of uneasiness, especially in the menacing middle section. As we shall see in Chapter 6, the contrasts are technical as well as expressive.

What historical factors could have influenced this stylistic change in *Contrasts* and the other works from this time? That these works were commissioned probably did not have much affect, the stipulations only concerning the level of performance ability and duration. Commissioned works prior to this period had not shown stylistic changes, as seen in *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, for instance (commissioned for the Basle Chamber Orchestra). Of more significance was the impact on Bartók of the European political situation in the 1930s. Not long after composing *Contrasts*, he wrote a letter to his Swiss friend, Müller-Widmann, devoting a great deal of space to describing a meeting between Hitler and Chamberlain (in 1938). The completion of *Contrasts* along with the *Violin Concerto* are only briefly mentioned. Bartók's growing despair is evident:³⁸

³⁷ See, for instance, Paul Griffiths, *Bartók*, pp.162-3

³⁸ Béla Bartók *Letters*, p.273.

I am leading an even more retired life here, if that is possible; I do not feel like meeting people, everyone is suspected of Nazism. I work nearly 10 hours a day, exclusively on folk-music material; but I would have to work 20 hours to make real progress. A distressing situation - I would so very much like to finish this work before we are involved in the next world catastrophe that's hanging in the air...
A war would of course ruin me, even if I wasn't hit by a bomb - and yet, I don't know if it wouldn't have been better to have it now than later!

Eventually Hungary became allied with Germany in World War II. Hitler's reputation improved following the return of lands to Hungary which had been taken away as a result of the Treaty of Trianon (1920). Bartók was horrified by the growth of Nazism which, with its racist and chauvinist policies, was completely the opposite of Bartók's ideal of a 'brotherhood of nations'.³⁹ Even before the letter quoted above, he was considering emigrating. However, his endless ethnomusicological work and his ageing mother prevented him from leaving, as well as the daunting prospect of making a new start in another country. Bartók's dilemma is apparent in another letter to Müller-Widmann from earlier in 1938:⁴⁰

And how I can then go on living in such a country or - which means the same thing - working, I simply cannot conceive. As a matter of fact, I would feel it my duty to emigrate, so long as that were possible. But - even in the most favourable circumstances - to have to earn my living in some foreign country ... would be immensely difficult and would cause me such distress of mind that I can hardly bear to think it. In that event I could achieve nothing, and in such conditions I could not do my proper and most important work anywhere else either [folk music study]. Consequently, it is exactly the same for me whether I go or stay - And then I have my mother here: shall I abandon her altogether in her last years? - No, I cannot do that! So much for Hungary, where, unfortunately, nearly all of our 'educated' Christians are adherents of the Nazi regime; I feel quite ashamed of coming from this class.

Without delving further into the details of Bartók's problems at this time, it is quite evident that his life was far from stable. It seems reasonable then, to find a reason in all this for the new extremes of contrast in his music which we discussed earlier. We should not, however, over-estimate such external influences on his music. Except perhaps for the *String Quartet No.6*, Bartók never allows his compositional language to be swamped by emotions or obvious symbolism, personal or otherwise. For instance, the optimistic, dance-like finale (with the theme of a 'brotherhood of nations') is maintained as the norm. Bartók's adoption

³⁹ See ch.1, p.136 for a discussion of Bartók's 'brotherhood of nations' ideal.

⁴⁰ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p. 267.

of the *verbunkos* idiom in the late works, and the consequent creation of a new type of movement, relaxed in tempo, also shows his interest in other, purely musical influences.⁴¹ Considering the turmoil Bartók was experiencing at this time, his music seems remarkably restrained in expression.

Contrasts is a work whose roots are many and varied. It has connections with both *Violin Rhapsodies* (written ten years earlier), and with the Hungarian popular art music genre, the *verbunkos*, as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 6. It also has connections with other art music sources as varied as Ravel and Scarlatti. In addition, the performers for whom it was written influenced its composition, and it is particularly this fact which requires us to examine the history of the work in more detail.

In a letter to Bartók dated August 11, 1938, the Hungarian violinist, Joseph Szigeti wrote:⁴²

...the sudden idea we had in the Pagani restaurant has become a reality by now,⁴³ since Benny Goodman (the world-famous jazz clarinetist star) visited me on the Riviera in the course of his short European "joy-ride". I took advantage of the situation to come to an agreement with him about the "order" under terms which he gladly accepted, and the price you stipulated (\$100.00) has been trebled. (My clever wife whom I consulted thought \$100.00 would not be enough, and said: "Let Benny pay three hundred", and rightly so.) Please send a registered letter to Benny Goodman in which you confirm that you will write a 6-7 minute clarinet-violin duet with piano accompaniment within a certain date. The copyright remains yours but you allow him three years sole playing-rights before having it published...

The result of Goodman's commission was *Contrasts*, written in just one month between August and September of 1938. In the same letter quoted above (p.19), Bartók announced to his friend that he had completed "two pieces", adding in parenthesis "3 pieces, to be exact, 16 minutes altogether".⁴⁴ In the first performance on January 9, 1939, the work appeared in

⁴¹ See ch.3 for further information. Examples of such movements are *Contrasts*, I, *Violin Concerto 1937-38*, I, *Divertimento*, I, *Piano Concerto No.3*, I.

⁴² Kárpáti, *Béla Bartók kamarazenéje* [Béla Bartók's Chamber Music], translation. Original text on p.328.

⁴³ Szigeti claimed the commissioning idea was his own "brainwave"; see Szigeti's *With Strings Attached. Reminiscences and Reflections* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p.129.

⁴⁴ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.272.

the two-movement form (first and third movements), and was entitled 'Rhapsody', but the middle movement was included following this and a long time later, Bartók settled on the name, 'Contrasts'.⁴⁵

Prior to the composition of *Contrasts*, Szigeti sent Bartók jazz records of Benny Goodman's playing to demonstrate the clarinettist's virtuoso abilities. This led to the use of some jazzy elements in the finale of the new work. Bartók was also well acquainted with the characteristics of Szigeti's violin playing. In 1926, for instance, Szigeti was permitted by Bartók to adapt some pieces from *For Children*, to be played by violin and piano. Two years later, Bartók wrote *Violin Rhapsody No.1* for Szigeti. Moreover, Szigeti was one of the series of Hubay pupils from Hungary with whom Bartók had been familiar for many years. As well as having a typical Hungarian style of performance ("superb and pithy" is Somfai's description⁴⁶), Szigeti was also a virtuosi and consequently *Contrasts* contains violin and clarinet parts which are confidently demanding in their technical requirements. There are even cadenzas for both instruments, probably resulting from Szigeti's joking remark that "...of course we hope that it will also contain brilliant clarinet and violin cadenzas".⁴⁷ The virtuosity is, however, offset by the simplicity of several passages and sections in the work, providing necessary contrast and variety of performance technique.

While touring the U.S.A. in 1940 (prior to settling in that country), Bartók recorded *Contrasts* with Szigeti and Goodman, and this occasion proved to be a highlight of his career. In his notes to this recording, Somfai writes:⁴⁸

What this American, [Goodman] who cut his teeth on, and made his name playing music of an entirely different sort, achieved in the New York studio in 1940, recording *Contrasts*, truly bordered on the miraculous. A sort of understanding came into being between Goodman and Bartók that led to a creative dialogue which on occasion spanned across Szigeti's playing of the violin part.

⁴⁵ Further details on the genesis of *Contrasts* are discussed in ch.3.

⁴⁶ Somfai, 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music 5* (Hungaroton LPX 11357), p.10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, from a letter from Szigeti to Bartók, August 11, 1938, p.10

⁴⁸ Somfai, 'Notes' to *Bartók at the Piano 1920-1945. Gramophone Records Piano Rolls Live recordings*, ed. László Somfai and Zoltán Kocsis (Hungaroton LPX 12326-33), p.26.

It was not only Goodman's playing abilities but also his enthusiasm for and interest in the music which assured a great performance. In his book, *The Kingdom of Swing*, Goodman writes about the "marvellous lesson" he received when rehearsing *Contrasts* with Bartók and Szigeti, and laments the apathy of concert audiences, ignorant of the skill involved in a composition such as *Contrasts*.⁴⁹

A year after *Contrasts* was written, World War II began; shortly afterwards, Bartók's mother died. Bartók sent his manuscripts to London for safety and in preparation for leaving Hungary. During his time in Budapest in 1940, Bartók composed and performed little, and he and his family finally decided to emigrate to America in October of that year.

Historical Background to Bartók, the Ethnomusicologist

In one of the letters quoted earlier in this 'Historical Background', Bartók claimed to be spending nearly ten hours a day working on folk music material. This statement is no exaggeration. When we consider the number of large and scholarly volumes of folk music collections Bartók produced (whether published or unpublished), it is little wonder he had to devote so much time to this side of his musical career. We can conclude that ethnomusicology was Bartók's chief occupation in life, even if it was his least successful one in terms of publication and financial reward. As far as the collection of folk music items was concerned, Bartók was at his happiest: "... I must admit that our arduous labour in this field [folk music collecting] gave us greater pleasure than any other. Those days which I spent in the villages among the peasants were the happiest days of my life."⁵⁰

Bartók's prodigious efforts to transcribe and analyse folk musics and publish the collections were spurred on by his desire to inform the world of folk music and its virtues. One way of publicising folk music was through arrangements, and these make up a sizeable

⁴⁹ Goodman, Benny and I. Kolodin, *The Kingdom of Swing* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1939), pp.242-3.

⁵⁰ BBE, "The Folk Songs of Hungary"(1928), p.332

quantity of his creative output (varying in style and scope). The eighty-five piano pieces entitled *For Children*, for instance, were written "...in order to acquaint the piano-studying children with the simple and non-romantic beauties of folk music".⁵¹

Elements of folk music appear in all Bartók's compositions written after 1905, but at various levels, and in direct and indirect ways. To understand some of the reasons why Bartók dedicated so much of his life to folk music and why it had such a great impact on his composition, we have to go back to his early days, when he first encountered authentic folk music.

As is well known, Bartók's earliest acquaintance with authentic folk music came while he was on holiday with his family in Gerlicepusztá, in 1904, where he heard the nursemaid singing a type of tune he had never heard before; this melody was an Hungarian folk song.⁵² The next year, Bartók met Kodály who was working on a doctorate thesis involving the comparative study of Hungarian folk song publications and collections with phonograph recordings made by Béla Vikár. In addition to further stimulating his interest in folk music, their meeting signalled the beginning of a long and fruitful friendship. The two worked on many folk music ventures in the years that followed. Their first collaboration was the publication of twenty Hungarian folk songs in 1906, ten being set by each composer. Although the publication did not sell well, their spirits were not dampened. In the same year, Bartók had made the first of his many collecting expeditions, using the Edison Phonograph and wax cylinders.

Bartók's appointment as professor of piano at the Liszt Academy in 1907 allowed him to continue his folklore research without too many financial worries. In the same year, he was able to visit the Székely people in Transylvania where he discovered the oldest type of Hungarian folk song, with a strong anhemitonic, pentatonic basis. In 1908, an article by Bartók on the Székely ballads was published in *Ethnographia*, the first of many he was to write on various aspects of Hungarian folk music. He also extended his collecting activities to include non-Hungarian material. Slovakian folk tunes had already been collected

⁵¹ BBE, "Contemporary Music in 1940. Piano Teaching", p.427.

⁵² See Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p.16, for the melody which Bartók heard.

by Bartók in 1906, while 1908 marked the beginning of the Rumanian ventures. It was from his contacts in Rumania that Bartók first had the opportunity to have a collection of folk transcriptions published. He offered his collection of Bihor songs as a gift to the Rumanian Academy of Sciences with the additional hope that they could be printed. With the help of the Rumanian musicologist, Kiriác, this collection was published in Bucharest in 1913. It included an analytical study of the contents by Bartók, partially employing a system of classification invented by the Finnish ethnomusicologist, Ilmari Krohn. Later, Bartók was to adopt this for his Hungarian folk music collection as well.

This success led Bartók to further his collecting of Rumanian folk music, resulting in another collection plus analysis, on the folk music of Maramureş, completed in November 1913. However, publication was halted by the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and eventually the Rumanian Academy cancelled the venture. It was not until 1923 that Bartók found another publisher for the manuscript. Nonetheless, he did manage to publish other short studies of Rumanian folk music, such as "The Folk Music Dialect of the Hunedoara Rumanians" which appeared in the journal, *Ethnographia*, in 1914.⁵³ Meanwhile, Bartók and Kodály were also interested in systematising the Hungarian folk collection and publishing it. They applied for support for the publication of the Hungarian "Corpus Musicae Popularis" from the Kisfaludy Society in 1913 but did not receive a reply. In December of that year, however, Bartók wrote to Kiriác, describing the classification project: "The task of making a Complete Edition of Hungarian folk songs (containing approximately 5000 songs) has been given to me and my colleague Zoltán Kodály (a first-rate musician), and in classifying them we have used Ilmari Krohn's system, with some slight modifications of our own."⁵⁴ Support was finally given to the project in the 1930s but, despite years of work, the collection was never published in Bartók's lifetime.⁵⁵

1913 was also the year Bartók travelled to Biskra in North Africa to collect the folk music of the Arabs resident there - a move that says much for Bartók's enthusiasm for folk

⁵³ See the English version of this essay in *BBE*, pp.103-14.

⁵⁴ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.128.

⁵⁵ See Sándor Kovács, "Bartók's System of Folksong Classification", *New Hungarian Quarterly*, v.22, 1981.

collecting.⁵⁶ Four years later, his Arabic collection appeared in an essay entitled "A Biskra vidéki arabok népzeneje" [The Folk Music of the Arabs of the Biskra Region] and was published in the Hungarian journal, *Szimfónia*. The smallish collection of Arabic items was to have a not inconsiderable influence on Bartók's own music, as we shall see. In addition to the Arabic material, Bartók also collected Ruthenian and Serbian folk items during his travels.

During the war, Bartók maintained his collecting expeditions although it became increasingly difficult to do so. He also composed a spate of folk arrangements, using Hungarian, Rumanian and Slovakian tunes.⁵⁷ At the end of the war opportunities to further collect folk music were severely limited and Bartók once again turned his attention towards the systematisation of his various folk collections. He was allowed more time to do so when his application to be relieved of some of his teaching at the Academy was upheld. Despite the difficulties caused by the political upheavals at this time, he was able to maintain his work on the folk material, producing a stream of studies and articles. The first such article to exhibit features of Bartók's later classification system was "The Melodies of Hungarian Soldiers' Songs" (1918), in which the items are divided into two categories, the 'Old' and 'New' styles.⁵⁸ In 1920, Bartók arrived at his concept of three basic categories of Hungarian folk melody, namely the 'Old', 'New' and 'melodies of heterogeneous kind', later called the 'Miscellaneous class'.⁵⁹ In the following year (when *VSI* was composed), Bartók completed the first draft of *A Magyar népdal* [The Hungarian Folk Song, or *HFS*]. Just

⁵⁶ See Appendix 1, map of Europe and the top of Africa, Biskra being situated in Algeria. Bartók braved extreme heat and uncomfortable surroundings in order to record the folk music, eventually succumbing to heat sickness (despite his gallant statements made in a letter preceding the expedition). See *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.121.

⁵⁷ These folk music arrangements include: *Three Hungarian Folksongs* for piano (1914-18), *Sonatina* for piano, using five Rumanian instrumental tunes (1915), *Rumanian Folk Dances* for piano using six instrumental tunes (1915), *Rumanian Christmas Carols* for piano, using twenty tunes (1915), *Two Rumanian Folksongs* for choir (1915), *Nine Rumanian Folksongs* for soprano and piano (1915), *Slovakian Folksongs* for soprano and piano (1916), *Eight Hungarian Folksongs* for soprano and piano (1907-17), *Four Slovakian Folksongs* for male choir (1917), *Fifteen Peasant Songs* for piano (1914-18) and *Three Hungarian Folksongs* for piano (1914-18).

⁵⁸ See *BBE*, pp.50ff.

⁵⁹ See "Hungarian Peasant Music", *BBE*, p.304. For a detailed description of the classification system, see Chapter 1 of the present thesis.

prior to this, he collaborated with Kodály on a volume of 150 Transylvanian folk songs. By this time, however, Bartók's approach to folk music classification differed to that of Kodály's and this particular volume represents Kodály's methods only. Their difference in approach became evident when Bartók's *HFS* was published in 1924. Although both men worked on the "Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae" during the 1930s, Bartók preferred to work in isolation with his own methods, leading to what appears to have been the end of their long friendship when Bartók left for the U.S.A. in 1940.⁶⁰

Apart from *HFS*, Bartók experienced great difficulties in having his folk music collections published in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1921, the Slovakian publishing firm, Slovenská Matica, agreed to print before 1925 Bartók's collection of almost three thousand Slovakian folk items. After several delays, Bartók twice cancelled the publishing agreement in 1932 and 1933 before renewing it and offering to prepare the manuscript for printing by himself. Still it remained unpublished until Bartók once again cancelled the agreement, only to be charged a large sum of money for expenses, in order to get the manuscript back. He refused to pay, and the manuscript has remained in Czechoslovakia ever since, being illegally published in part, with volume one appearing in 1959. A second disaster concerned his collection of Rumanian Christmas carols (*colinde*). Bartók began work on classifying and analysing the items in this collection in 1923 with the intention of publishing them in a volume separate from the rest of the Rumanian folk material. Spurred on by the interest shown by Oxford University Press of England, Bartók had *colinde* ready for publication in September, 1926, just after composing *PS*. After sending copies to both Oxford University Press and the Academy in Bucharest, Bartók had another long, frustrating wait while the publishers considered the manuscript. Ultimately, Bartók withdrew his manuscript (due to the poor translations of the song texts made by the publishers) and had it published in part only and at his own expense by Universal Edition of Vienna, in 1935.

⁶⁰ See *HFS*, p.xxxi of the preface by Suchoff, in which he quotes a letter of Kodály's to Bartók written in 1940, describing the problems of their folk music project in the 1930s.

^{60b} A second volume of Slovakian Folk Songs was published in 1970, while a third volume has yet to be released.

Bartók's work on folk music material in the 1930s was even more intensive than in the previous decade. In 1934, he was commissioned to prepare for publication the large Hungarian folk song collection of about three thousand items, the same project he and Kodály had planned twenty years earlier. This he worked on until 1940, the project remaining incomplete at his death. From 1936-39, Bartók along with other ethnomusicologists worked towards producing gramophone recordings of Hungarian folk music, with transcriptions and analytical notes, for commercial release. The so-called 'Pátria series' included almost fifty records at the time when Bartók resigned from the venture; he did so because some records were put on the market without the transcriptions and notes and without his knowledge.⁶¹ During the 1930s, Bartók also revised and classified his Rumanian collection completing the volume of instrumental music (*RFM 1*) and part of the vocal volume (*RFM 2*) by the time of his 1940 concert tour to the U.S.A. (when *Contrasts* was recorded). These, along with a third volume of texts remained unpublished at Bartók's death in 1945. In addition to the Hungarian and Rumanian collections, Bartók also made a collection of Turkish folk music (from his exhibition to Anatolia in 1936) and studied Bulgarian folk music from which he learned of the characteristic 'Bulgarian rhythm' that influenced several works in the 1930s.

This summary gives the years in which material was collected, amended and published (if they were published), and their historical position relative to the works under study. (Inclusive dates do not necessarily mean Bartók collected folk music during every year of the particular period.)

⁶¹ See Somfai, 'Notes' to *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with Bartók's Transcriptions*, ed. László Somfai (Hungaroton LPX 18058-60).

- 1905-1918 - collecting Hungarian folk music
- 1906-1916 - collecting Slovakian folk music
- 1908-1917 - collecting Rumanian folk music
- 1913 - collecting Arabic folk music

- 1905-1918 - Ruthenian, Serbian and Bulgarian items also sporadically collected.

- 1913 - *Cântece populare românești din comitatul Bihor (Ungaria)* [Rumanian folksongs from the county of Bihor (Hungary)] published in Bucharest, Rumania.
- 1913 - Rumanian Folk Music from Maramureș completed but not published until 1923, under the title *Volksmusik der Rumänen von Maramureș* (in German).
- 1918 - working at the classification of folk items, preparing *HFS*, collaborating with Kodály on the publication of 150 Transylvanian folk songs.
- 1921 - *Sonata for Violin and Piano No.1 (VS1)* composed between October and December.
- 1923 - *Transylvanian Hungarians. Folksongs*, published.
- 1924 - *A Magyar népdal* [The Hungarian Folksong] (*HFS*) published; German translation, 1925; English translation, 1931.
- 1922-1928 - working on Slovakian collection for publication
- 1923-1926 - working on *Colinde* for publication
- 1926 - *Piano Sonata(1926) (PS)* composed in July-August.
- 1934 - commissioned to work on the Hungarian universal collection (the *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae*)
- 1934 - becomes familiar with Stoin's collection of Bulgarian folkmusic and 'Bulgarian rhythm'
- 1933-1945 - Revises and prepares Rumanian collection for publication (remains unpublished at Bartók's death; RFM 1-3 published 1967, RFM 4 (much of the material coming from *Melodien der rumänischen Colinde* (1935)) and RFM 5(The Maramures collection), published 1975.
- 1935 - *Melodien der rumänischen Colinde*

(*Weihnachtslieder*) published.

- 1936 - collecting folk music in Turkey (collection published in 1976, in two separate editions).
- 1936 - Bartók, in association with other ethnomusicologists make the first gramophone recordings of Hungarian folk music.
- 1937-1938 - works on the 'Pátria series' of gramophone records of folk music; abandons project in 1939.
- 1938 - *Contrasts* for violin, clarinet and piano composed in August and September.
- 1940 - leaves Hungary for the U.S.A.
- 1940-1945 - In addition to the Rumanian collection, Bartók works on Parry's collection of Serbian folk music (first published in 1951, as *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs*). Bartók's entire collection of folk music from Yugoslavia was collated and edited by Benjamin Suchoff, resulting in the publication *Yugoslav Folk Music* (v.1-4), 1978.

This list raises several issues. First, Bartók had stopped collecting folk music (apart from the Turkish collection of 1936) three years prior to writing the earliest of the works under study (*VSI*). In these three years, he began analysing and organising his folk material, and absorbing it further into his own compositional style. To some extent, we could expect the folk elements in Bartók's abstract works to be distanced from the original source, depending on the composer's particular intention in each circumstance. The further we move on from 1918, the less likely we are to encounter musical ideas in an abstract work that spring straight from the white-hot inspiration of folk music. This is reflected in Bartók's folk music arrangements which become more and more sophisticated and elaborate in treatment as the purely compositional aspects of the settings become increasingly important to him. Compare, for instance, the accompaniment to the vocal line in *Eight Hungarian Folksongs* (1907-17) with that of the series *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs* (1929).

The second issue is the question as to which folk collections or publications are of relevance when considering the various folk influences on the works under study. Naturally, all the folk sources available should be considered, but we must remember that some of Bartók's writings and publications were completed after the composition of *VSI*,

PS and *Contrasts*. Most importantly, the big volumes of Rumanian instrumental and vocal music (plus texts, *RFM 1-3*) consist of revisions of earlier transcriptions. Since the revisions were made in the 1930s, these volumes cannot consistently be used as sources for possible direct influences on *VS1* and *PS*, both written in the 1920s. Likewise, the volume of Rumanian Christmas Carols (*RFM 4*) was not begun until two years after *VS1* was composed. *RFM 5* (the Maramureş collection), on the other hand, is an English version of a manuscript Bartók completed well before any of the three works were written and consequently, can be regarded as a direct source. There are more obvious examples of this general chronological point: the Turkish collection of 1936, the discovery of 'Bulgarian rhythm' in the 1930s and the Parry collection of Serbian folk music which Bartók worked on in the 1940s are all too late to have relevance to *VS1* and *PS*. Therefore, in some instances we must refer back to Bartók's original, unrevised transcriptions to see the sources from which he worked when integrating folk music into his compositions.

By comparison with the revised transcriptions of the 1930s, Bartók's original folk transcriptions are much simpler and often lacking in detail or analysis. Along with the actual sound recordings, however, they constitute a vital source material.

Finally, the above chronology indicates the areas of folk music Bartók was concentrating on when composing the works under study. How much significance we can attach to this remains to be seen. We should not automatically expect to find elements of a specific folk style simply because the composer was working with that particular style in his capacity as an ethnomusicologist, at the time. Nonetheless, certain correlations can be observed. For instance, several works between 1914-1927 contain recognizable features from Arabic folk music, collected in 1913.⁶² Similarly, from 1934 onwards, Bartók's works often contain sections in Bulgarian rhythm, relating directly to his discovery of this feature of Bulgarian folk music in 1934.⁶³

⁶² Examples can be found in *Suite*, op.14 (III), *The Miraculous Mandarin*, the *Second Sonata for violin and piano*, *VS1*, *Dance Suite* and *String Quartet No.4*.

⁶³ Examples can be found in *String Quartet No.5*, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, *Contrasts*, *Mikrokosmos* and *Concerto for Orchestra*.

When Bartók died in 1945, several of his beloved folk music projects were left unfinished. The Serbian, Turkish, Rumanian and Slovakian collections all had to wait for posthumous publication - the last of these has still not been completely published. Above all, the grand Hungarian 'universal collection' - to quote Sándor Kovács, "Bartók's principal work" - still remains unpublished, a fact that seems extraordinary when we consider Bartók's world stature and the forty years that have passed since his death.⁶⁴ It is surely these things principally that Bartók was referring to when he stated just prior to his death, "I am only sorry to be going with my luggage full".⁶⁵

⁶⁴ There are good reasons for this state of affairs, outlined in Kovács's essay, "Bartók and Folksong Classification", *op. cit.* As Kovács says, however, it means that any research of Bartók will of necessity be incomplete.

⁶⁵ As quoted in Hamish Milne's *Bartók: His Life and Times* (U.S.A: Hippocrene Books Inc., 1982), p.104.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a considerable amount of literature about Bartók by comparison with other twentieth-century composers. Despite this, little is devoted specifically to the works under study. Brief descriptions of these occur in the many general books on Bartók. There are lengthy sections on *Contrasts* and *VSI* in Kárpáti's *Bartók Kamarazéneje* [Bartók's Chamber Music], and the same author has written a separate article on *Contrasts* and also one in which *VSI* is a prominent example. *PS* and *VSI* are the subject of penetrating articles by László Somfai, while both he and Kárpáti have provided detailed, scholarly notes to the Hungaroton recordings of these works. Somfai's 'commentary' to the facsimile edition of the second draft of *PS* is another important source of information. Of the dissertations to have touched upon any of the works under study, none have dealt in detail with the influence of folk music on Bartók's compositional style.

In this review of literature, the primary and secondary sources pertaining to direct folk influences in Bartók's music shall be outlined first, relating to Part One of the thesis. Naturally, there is considerable overlap between these sources and those pertaining to the indirect folk influence, relevant to Part Two of the thesis. However, it is felt that a clearer overview of the various sources is obtained by this division.

THE DIRECT FOLK MUSIC INFLUENCES: (a) Primary Sources

It is the primary literary sources which we must examine first. There is a large body of material in this category. The majority of Bartók's writings concern folk music, either by itself or in relation to art music. In the 'Historical Background', an outline of Bartók's primary ethnomusicological sources was provided; further discussion of these is required.

Bartók's major ethnomusicological studies which have particular relevance to the works under study are:

The Hungarian Folk Song (HFS) , plus the rest of Bartók's Hungarian collection which is as yet unpublished in complete form.

Rumanian Folk Music, v.1 (Instrumental Music, *RFM 1*), v.5 (Maramureş collection, *RFM 5*).

HFS is particularly relevant to Chapter 1 and *RFM 1* and 5 to Chapter 2 of this thesis. A general description of their contents appears at the beginning of each of these chapters. It will be noticed that the second, third and fourth Rumanian volumes (*RFM 2, 3, 4*) have been omitted from the list above. These sources are not directly used in the works under study. However, *RFM 2* and *RFM 4* have an indirect relevance, as for instance in the chapter dealing with the peasant's 'sound-world' (ch.4). Although Bartók's collection of Slovakian folk melodies is also large (filling three volumes so far of the illegal *Slovenské L'udoré Piesne* [Slovakian Folk Songs]), its significance for the works under study is not as great as that of the Hungarian and Rumanian collections. The characteristics of Slovakian folksong as Bartók knew it, along with his smaller collections of Arabic, Ruthenian and Serbo-Croatian folk music, will be discussed at the relevant points in the text.

The description of *HFS* in Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to Bartók's ethnomusicological methods - the manner in which he analyses and classifies the folk items. Although Bartók's approach changed over the years, the fundamental characteristics were retained in the other relevant collections. Therefore, it is not necessary to describe the workings of each of these collections individually.

In addition to Bartók's major ethnomusicological writings, there are numerous essays, articles and lectures on the subject of folk music. The normally reticent Bartók never missed an opportunity to inform the public about folk music, whether discussing it by itself or in relation to art music (by himself or by other composers). The chief source in the English language is *Béla Bartók Essays (BBE)*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff (published in 1976), containing a comprehensive selection of eighty-nine essays, articles, interviews, lectures, programme notes or analyses. Most of the folk music nationalities and genres Bartók collected are represented, in varying degrees of detail. The three studies of Slovakian folk music are short and lacking in detail by comparison with the descriptions of folk music

from other nations. Although there is only one essay dedicated to instrumental folk music, it is a lengthy one and contains many transcriptions. The essay on Arabic folk music, entitled "A Biskra Vidéki Arabok Népzénje" [The folk music of the Arabs of the Biskra region] which contains the transcriptions of Arabic folk music discussed earlier, is omitted (and thus is not available in English at all). While Bartók did not collect Bulgarian folk music, he studied other collections of it in the 1930s, producing the essay "The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm" (1938), written in the same year as *Contrasts*. The impact of the folk source on this work is patently discernible.

It is worth reiterating at this point that any study of the folk influences in Bartók's music must take careful account of the chronology of his various folk music collections and publications. This applies not only to transcriptions but also to Bartók's analytical comments and classification methods. The way in which Bartók described and arranged his folk material in *HFS* (1924) was not necessarily the same as the methods he used in the 1930s. Indeed, Sándor Kovács emphasizes Bartók's "extraordinary flexibility" as being one of his "most characteristic traits" with regard to his ethnomusicological works.¹ Kovács gives examples of the changes Bartók made to his methods of folk song classification in order to perfect his system, with regard to the Hungarian collection. This is applicable to the Rumanian collection also, which Bartók revised in the 1930s, adding analytical descriptions in preparation for later publication. The Rumanian revisions must be taken into account in our analysis of the finales of *Contrasts* (1938) and *VS1* (1921), both of which contain imitations of Rumanian instrumental folk pieces. The former was written long after the revisions had started but the latter was written well before them. Therefore, the observations made in *RFM 1* may not have relevance as far as the direct Rumanian folk influences in *VS1* are concerned.²

¹ Kovács, Sándor "Bartók's System of Folksong Classification", *op. cit.*, pp.6-7.

² As it happens, the main Rumanian folk imitations in *VS1*, III, can be traced to Bartók's Maramures collection (the instrumental pieces), which was written in 1912 and published in 1923 and, therefore, is not affected by revisions of the sort made in the 1930s.

Additional details about folk music are contained in many of Bartók's letters. One example is his account of collecting folk songs in Hungary in an unusually lengthy letter to Stefi Geyer. Bartók makes an important philosophical statement regarding the use of folk music sources in his compositions, in a famous letter to Octavian Beu, in 1931.

In addition to the written primary sources, the author was fortunate enough to have access to Bartók's folk collection in sound, from tape recordings of the original phonograph recordings, contained in the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum. Copies of Bartók's original (unpublished and unrevised) transcriptions were also available. Thus, the bulk of the collection was audited, including items from all the nations in which Bartók worked. The most direct result of this primary source was the writing of Chapter 4 of this thesis, about the peasant 'sound-world' and the imitation of performance 'mistakes' in folk music. The importance of experiencing Bartók's folk collection in sound should not be underestimated, as Bartók himself emphasizes.³ Therefore, a cassette containing folk items accompanies the text of this chapter. Unfortunately, the author was able to obtain recordings of Hungarian and Arabic folk music only; thus, Rumanian, Slovakian, Ruthenian and Serbian folk musics are not represented.

Supplementing this source are the published recordings of Bartók's folk collections. The disc, *Hungarian Folk Music Collected by Béla Bartók*, edited by Bálint Sárosi, contains a wide selection of Hungarian folk songs and instrumental items, many of these also appearing in Bartók's folk music arrangements. The 'Patria' series of records were commented upon in the 'Historical Background'. Selections from this series are present on the disc, *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with Béla Bartók's Transcriptions*, edited by László Somfai. Because of the late appearance of this collection in terms of Bartók's lifetime, this series cannot be considered of great importance to the present thesis (despite the fact that Bartók was working on the series around about the time he composed *Contrasts*).

Finally, there are general published recordings of Hungarian folk music (plus extensive notes and transcriptions) which include items from Bartók's collection along with

³ See ch.4, p.224.

items collected by other musicologists (both contemporary to and after Bartók). Therefore, care must be taken to consider only those individual items or genres which Bartók was familiar with (or could have been familiar with).

(b) Secondary Sources

In addition to Bartók's collections from various countries and regions, collections made by other musicologists during his lifetime with which he was familiar should also be considered. The most important folk collector in this respect is, of course, Zoltán Kodály with whom Bartók was in close contact for most of his career. Kodály's book, *Folk Music of Hungary* (published in 1937), is the most important and accessible source for the purposes of this thesis, containing items collected by Kodály, Bartók and others, together with a detailed text. It demonstrates Kodály's different approach to the classification of folk music (compared with Bartók's method in *HFS*). Items are organised according to genre, such as children's songs, laments, instrumental music and so on, and considerable space is devoted to tracing the links between Hungarian folk music and other sources, from both folk and art music. The monumental collection of Hungarian folk music, *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae*, is another significant source, although it includes much material collected after Bartók's death which is therefore irrelevant.⁴ There are other folk items which Bartók knew, such as the melodies in the early Vikár collection (1895). As it would take many years to become familiar with all the folk material with which Bartók was acquainted, the author has relied to a considerable extent upon the research and knowledge of other musicologists who have traced the various folk influences in Bartók's works. For example, the connection between a melody in *Contrasts*, I, and an item in Vikár's collection was found thanks to the research of Janós Kárpáti rather than my own perusal of folk sources. All such finds via secondary sources are acknowledged.

⁴ For details of the constitution of *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae*, see the editors preface to *HFS*, p.xxxvii-xl. Seven volumes of this collection have been published so far, using classification systems different to Bartók's or Kodály's and edited by various ethnomusicologists.

Another important secondary source is Vera Lampert's catalogue of original transcriptions of the folk music items Bartók arranged as concert pieces, published in 1980.⁵ This is the only large body of Bartók's original, unrevised transcriptions to be published so far. In addition to the transcriptions and source notes, a concise chart of all Bartók's folk music arrangements and the nationality of the matching folk items is provided, along with several facsimiles. This catalogue is of considerable use when examining possible folk models in the works under study. It is also a good selection of the types of folk music Bartók was most interested in as a composer. Supplementing this catalogue is an essay by Lampert (published two years later) entitled "Bartók's Choice of Theme for Folksong Arrangement: Some Lessons of the Folk Music Sources of Bartók's Works",⁶ in which the types of folk music and folk music characteristics that Bartók favoured in his creative works are explored more thoroughly. The conclusions Lampert makes have direct relevance to the subject of Bartók's folkmusic imitations in abstract works, as we shall see in Part One.

THE INDIRECT FOLK MUSIC INFLUENCE: (a) Primary Sources

So far, we have examined literature which is relevant to the study of direct folk music influence in Bartók's music. What follows is an overview of literature relevant to Part Two of this thesis, concerning the indirect folk music influence in Bartók's music (and the works under study, in particular). While the primary sources are not numerous, there is a wealth of secondary sources. Not all of these could be covered in such a review as this, but the main ones are dealt with in some detail.

⁵ Vera Lampert *Bartók népdalfeldolgozásainak forrásjegyzéke (Magyar, Szlovák, Román, Rutén, Szerb és Arab népdalok és Táncok)* [The source-catalogue of the folk song arrangements of Bartók (Hungarian, Slovakian, Rumanian, Ruthenian, Serbian and Arabic folk songs and dances)] (Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1980). This catalogue also appears in German, in *Documenta Bartókiana* v.6, ed. László Somfai, pp.15-149.

⁶ See *Studia Musicologica*, v.24, pp.401-9, 1982.

The two prime English-language sources of Bartók's writings in this area are *Béla Bartók Essays*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff, and *Béla Bartók Letters*, edited by János Demény. There are other important sources not translated into English, such as *Béla Bartók Levelei* [*Béla Bartók Letters*, ed. János Demény]. Occasionally reference is made to these in a translation. While not containing all Bartók's studies and articles, *Béla Bartók Essays* includes most of the composer's significant literary contributions in the relevant areas of folk music and art music. There are many articles on the various folk musics Bartók was in contact with, some articles about his own compositions (but none about the works under study) and most importantly for us, several articles dealing with the relationship between folk music and art music in which he uses his own works (as well as the works of others) as examples. Two articles on this topic from 1920-1921 are particularly relevant to *VS1*. While living in the U.S.A. during World War II, Bartók presented several lectures, including one entitled "The Relation Between Contemporary Hungarian Art Music and Folk Music" (1941) and an incomplete group called the 'Harvard Lectures' (1943).⁷ In the 'Harvard Lectures', Bartók provides the most detailed general account of his compositional methods. He begins with an overview of the state of contemporary music (and art in general) and then moves onto the various aspects of folk music incorporated into his works, including "tonality, melody, rhythm, and even structural influence".⁸ In the second lecture, he introduces an important technique which he labels 'bi-modality' or 'polymodality', the simultaneous use of two or more modes (the modal resource coming from folk music). This leads to a description of a second type of chromaticism called 'modal chromaticism' or 'polymodal chromaticism', in which the combination of two or more modal collections covers the chromatic scale (or a segment of it). This applies to single melodic lines, and to the combination of parts. Bartók then introduces his 'new chromaticism', which evolved from his use of 'modal chromaticism' in melodic lines. In this third type of chromaticism, the tones in a chromatic melodic line function as independent degrees, in the same way as in a diatonic melody. He first encountered this type of chromatic melody over a restricted

⁷ Illness prevented Bartók delivering more than four of the proposed series of eight lectures.

⁸ *BBE*, p.363.

range in Arabic folk music (collected in 1913), and late in life also discovered it in Dalmatian folk music (from Yugoslavia).⁹ These three types of chromaticism will be illustrated in relation to the secondary sources of literature, as well as by the works under study. Finally, Bartók discusses rhythm, including various features from Hungarian folk music, asymmetrical rhythm and its different folk origins, and the way in which these features are exploited in Bartók's music.

Nowhere in Bartók's writings does he analyse in detail single works or portions of single works. The essays mentioned above deal with general aspects of his music, touching on important technical devices but never elaborating to a great extent. Therefore, we must use these general descriptions as a spring-board for detailed analysis of the works under study, drawing on other sources where necessary

Ideally, these 'other sources' should include Bartók's manuscripts for the composition of *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts*. Unfortunately, most of the relevant manuscripts are being kept hidden from public view in the Bartók Archives in New York and consequently, the creative process in these works remains largely unknown. The exception to this concerns *PS*. In addition to the final published version, the second draft has also appeared in facsimile edition.¹⁰ This manuscript was presented by Bartók as a gift to the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest in 1928. Moreover, a few of Bartók's sketches for the third movement of *PS* have also appeared in Somfai's essay "A Zongoraszonáta finaléjának metamorfózisa" [Metamorphosis in the finale of the Piano Sonata].¹¹ These sources are of considerable value in the present thesis. However, the first draft of *PS*, which would be of the most value as regards the creative process, remains a mystery.

⁹ For a further description of this type of chromaticism in Arabic and Dalmatian folk music see Bartók's *Yugoslav Folk Music* v.1, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (New York: The State University of New York Press, 1978), pp.61-4.

¹⁰ *Sonata (1926)* piano solo, facsimile edition, commentary by László Somfai (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1980).

¹¹ See László Somfai, *Tizennyolc Bartók-tanulmány* [Eighteen Bartók-Essays] (Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1981), pp.88-103.

(b) Secondary Sources

In recent years, there has been a spate of general books about Bartók, especially in the West. Perhaps this was a natural reaction to the 1950s and 60s when all that was available were Halsey Stevens' *The Life and Work of Béla Bartók* and Serge Moreaux's *Béla Bartók*. Most recently, Paul Griffith's *Bartók* (1984) has appeared as part of the Master Musicians series, replacing Lajos Lesznai's rather flimsy contribution to the same series, entitled *Bartók* (first published in 1961, translated into English in 1973). Griffith's book is certainly more comprehensive and his discussion of *VS1* is scrutinised in Chapter 7 of this thesis. As is the danger in general books, however, he sometimes sacrifices important details in order to make a pretty argument or follow a preconceived idea - this is the case with his superficial description of *Contrasts*. Other Western biographies such as those by Helm and Miln do not contribute much towards the issues dealt with in this thesis, but help to fill out the details of Bartók's life. None of these are as comprehensive in describing the events in Bartók's life as *Béla Bartók* by the Hungarian, Ujfalussy, which also attempts to outline the political background more thoroughly. Counterbalancing this book is Kroó's *A Guide to Bartók*, which concentrates on the composer's music, devoting a separate section to each of his main works. *VS1* and *Contrasts* are covered, but *PS* is omitted. Intended as a guide for the average music lover, this book is not of great significance in the context of this thesis. A concise and yet most comprehensive general account is Somfai and Lampert's entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980). While some of the details in this account can only be understood after considerable reading and research, this essay is the best possible introduction to Bartók, the etnomusicologist, composer, pianist, teacher and man. His brief tonal analysis of *VS1*, applying Lendvai's methods will be discussed in Chapter 7.

There have been many analytical approaches made to Bartók's music over the years. For our purposes, only those approaches which take at least some account of the folk music influence will be considered. Surprising as it may seem, there have been attempts to analyse Bartók's music in purely abstract terms, without regard to the possible folk sources and thus neglecting a huge part of Bartók's musical experience. Some examples of this are

summarised in a recent essay by Elliott Antokoletz, entitled "The Music of Bartók: Some Theoretical Approaches in the U.S.A.",¹² including Schenkerian and serial analyses. Such approaches are never likely to present a complete view of Bartók's compositional methods and influences. From the author's research, it seems the most significant secondary sources on Bartók's musical language and the influence of folk music come from Hungary, the composer's native country. We can point to three Hungarian musicologists in particular: Ernő Lendvai, János Kárpáti and László Somfai.

Lendvai's ideas on Bartók's music are well established, dating back to the years immediately following Bartók's death in 1945. However, they are still the subject of heated debate and controversy, as exemplified by the literary exchanges between Lendvai and Roy Howat, and Lendvai and Somfai during the present decade.¹³ In a review of Lendvai's most recent book, "The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály" (1984), Malcolm Gillies casts serious doubts on Lendvai's academic credibility, concluding thus: "His [Lendvai's] great ideas of the 1940s and 1950s have not, on the evidence of this book, been matched or refined in the years since".¹⁴ The following summary concentrates on some of Lendvai's basic concepts and ideas, with particular emphasis on the role of folk music.

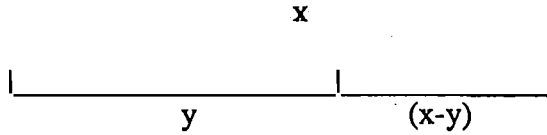
"Bartók's method, in his construction of form and harmony, is closely connected with the law of GS [golden section]".¹⁵ This simple statement brings us immediately to one of the most important aspects of Lendvai's analytical approach to Bartók's music. The golden section (abbreviated to GS) is a division of distance in which the proportion of the whole to the larger part corresponds to the proportion of the larger to the smaller part:

¹² See *Studia Musicologica* v.24 (supplement), 1982, pp.67-74.

¹³ See Lendvai's "Arany Metszés?" [Golden Sections?], *Muzsika*, february, 1981, pp.45-46, and "Válasz Bartók-Szonáta ügyben" [A reply about the matter concerning the Bartók Sonata], *Muzsika*, April, 1981, pp.43-5, and László Somfai's "Válasz Arany Metszés ügyben" [A reply to the matter concerning the Golden Section], *Muzsika*, March, 1981, pp.31-2. See also Lendvai's "The Limits of Musical Analysis", *The New Hungarian Quarterly* v.97, 1985.

¹⁴ Malcolm Gillies, review of Lendvai's "The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály", to appear in *Music Analysis* in 1986.

¹⁵ Ernő Lendvai *Béla Bartók - An Analysis of his Music* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1971), p.18.



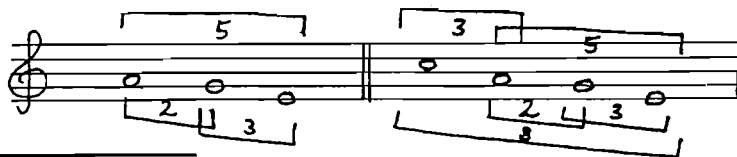
If $x=1$, then $y=0.618...$ and $(x-y)=0.382...$

Lendvai applies this special proportion to form and harmony in many of Bartók's works after 1926 (although he uses some earlier works in his examples).¹⁶ The formal approach shall be discussed at length in Chapter 9 of this thesis; it is the aspect of pitch organisation which is more significant and needs to be discussed here. Lendvai states that Bartók's 'chromatic system' employs the laws of GS and the Fibonacci series, a numerical sequence which approximates the value of GS. The sequence is as follows: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, ... (where the GS of 89 is approximately 55, the GS of 55 is approximately 34, and so on).¹⁷ Intervals and chords in Bartók's music are based on these GS numbers, the numbers referring to semitones, thus:¹⁸

2 = major second
 3 = minor third
 5 = perfect fourth
 8 = minor sixth
 13 = augmented octave

Having demonstrated the prominence of these intervals in examples from Bartók's music, Lendvai then relates the GS basis to folk music:¹⁹

That GS is not an external restriction but one of the most intrinsic laws of music is demonstrated by *pentatony* - perhaps the most ancient human sound system - which may be regarded as a pure musical expression of the GS principle. ...Pentatony, particularly the most ancient forms of minor pentatony (*la* and *re*), rests on a pattern reflected by the melody steps of a major second (2), minor third (3) and fourth (5).



¹⁶ Ernő Lendvai, *The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály* (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1983).

¹⁷ Another feature of the Fibonacci series is that it is an arithmetic sequence: $0+1=1$, $1+1=2$, $1+2=3$, $2+3=5$, $3+5=8$, $5+8=13$, etc.

¹⁸ The Fibonacci number, 1 (which equals the minor second), is omitted by Lendvai.

¹⁹ Lendvai, *Béla Bartók - An Analysis of his Music*, pp.48-9.

Pentatonicism in Bartók's music originates in Hungarian folk music, particularly the older types, as we shall see in Chapter 1. Lendvai's proposition is that the pentatonic intervals of Hungarian folk music arose naturally from GS, and become integrated into a complete melodic, harmonic and formal system in Bartók's music.

There is, however, a serious flaw in Lendvai's theory outlined above. Bartók's view of Hungarian pentatonicism as given in *HFS* and elsewhere includes the intervals of a perfect fifth and a minor seventh. The basic pentatonic scale Bartók found is as follows:

Ex. 1: Hungarian pentatonic scale.



Bartók stressed (on more than one occasion) that "In these pentatonic scales the third, fifth and seventh are of equal rank and importance".²⁰ The consonant character of the minor seventh, in particular, led him to use it in combination with the basic triad - this is one of the most basic examples of Bartók integrating an intervallic characteristic of folk music into his harmonic language. Bartók continues: "Because of the equal importance of the above-named degrees of the pentatonic scale, it follows that in pentatonic melodies the modal diminished seventh takes on the character of a consonant interval. This fact, as early as 1905, led me to end a composition in f# minor with the chord f# a c# e".²¹ However, the perfect fifth and the minor seventh do not fit into Lendvai's GS system. The former consists of 7 semitones and the latter, 10, neither of which are Fibonacci numbers. As we can see from the example under the quotation above, Lendvai chooses to highlight only a segment of the pentatonic

²⁰ BBE, "The Folksongs of Hungary", p.334.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.334-5. The composition referred to is the *Second Suite*, third movement.

It is notable how Lendvai again avoids awkward non-GS intervals. The m.6 between A and F is highlighted (=8), but not so the diminished octave between A[♯] and A[♭] (=11). There are a multitude of possible 'alpha' chords, from which Lendvai isolates five main types:²³

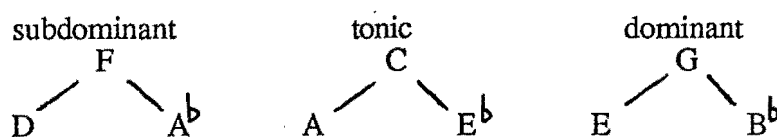
Ex.4



Numerous examples of occurrences of such harmonies in Bartók's music are provided. Although the GS theory may be flawed, Lendvai's identification of these chord types in Bartók's music provide a useful reference point in our harmonic analysis of the works under study.

In addition to having a supposed basis in GS, the pentatonic intervals, scale models and 'alpha' chords also fit into Lendvai's axis system of tonality (which he claims is present in Bartók's music). It is important to outline Lendvai's axis system at this point, despite its seeming irrelevance as far as folk music influence is concerned.

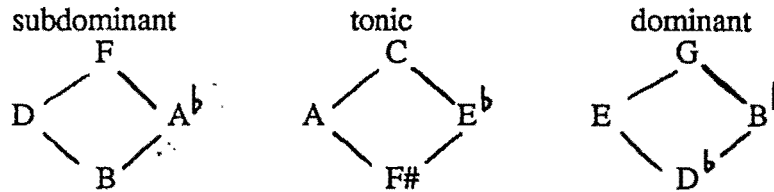
Western European classical harmony is based on the functions of the primary triads: tonic, dominant and subdominant. The secondary triads are relatives of these, VI being the relative of I, II being the relative of IV and III being the relative of V. Each secondary triad can substitute their relative primary triad without altering the essential tonic, dominant or subdominant function of the chord. In the nineteenth century, the relatives a m.3 above as well as a m.3 below became commonly used as chord substitutes, extending the functions of the primary triads as follows:



²³ Lendvai, *Workshop of Bartók and Kodály*, "Harmonic Principles", Ex.1, p.354.

Lendvai states:²⁴

The axis system is none other than the recognition of the fact that the tonic A and E flat ... not only have C as a common relative, but also the F sharp or G flat degree. Likewise, the common relative between the sub-dominant D and A flat is not only F but also the B. Finally, G and C sharp (or D flat) are equally the common relatives of the dominant E and B flat degrees:



The primary triads (on C, F and G above) define poles while the relatives a tritone away (on F♯, B and D♭ above) define counterpoles, using Lendvai's terminology. In the axis system, poles and counterpoles are brought into close proximity without an alteration in the function of the basic tonal areas (whether tonic, dominant or subdominant). For example, an F♯ major triad may substitute or be combined with a C major triad (in the tonal context of C major) and the harmony is still based on the tonic. This is comparable to the substitution of the tonic C major by its relative, A minor, in classical music.

In addition to determining the tonal function of harmony, the axis system is applied by Lendvai to long-distance tonal schemes. For example, the four movements of *Music for Percussion, Celesta and Strings* outline the tonal axis, being based on A, C, F♯ and A respectively (and moving to counterpoles within each movement).²⁵

Hungarian pentatonicism in folk music is related to the axis system, as Lendvai demonstrates. The pentatonic segment from the quotation on p.42 of this 'Review' can be organized into a cyclic sequence that covers the complete axis:

Ex.5:



²⁴ *Ibid.*, "Axis System", p.270

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.76.

Chords and pitch-patterns constructed from the characteristic pentatonic intervals (such as 'alpha' chords) also fit into the axis system. In other words, we are able to determine the tonal implications of such chords or pitch-patterns by reference to this system, as the following examples show:

Ex.6:

Tonal Context: C

[A]

Tonic C + A Dominant G + B(minor) Subdominant F + D (minor)

[B]

1:2 model, on Tonic 'axis' 'alpha' 1:5 model on Dominant 'axis' quartal chord

Covers pitch content of 1:2 model

[C]

C major/minor E major/minor F# major/minor A major/minor

In Ex.6c, the combination of all the substitute chords on the tonic axis produces a pitch content equivalent to the 1:2 model. An eight-note 'alpha' chord on the tonic also outlines the same 1:2 model, as seen in Ex.6b. Consequently, Lendvai describes the 1:2 model as the "basic scale" of Bartók's chromatic system.²⁶

It is important to remember that the purpose of the axis system is to determine the tonal centres of chords and pitch-patterns. With regard to harmony, Lendvai writes, "In order to feel the tonality of a chord, we need at least two notes: in the simplest case the root, say C, and its fifth G, or its major third E, when G or E respectively supports the C."²⁷ Therefore, Lendvai's axis system is only relevant when triadic-based structures are

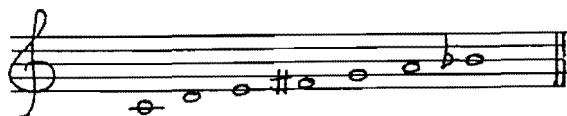
²⁶ Lendvai, *Béla Bartók - An Analysis of his Music*, p.55.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.43.

employed in the music. As we shall see, however, much of Bartók's music is not based on such traditional triads. This poses another stumbling block when attempting to interpret tonality using Lendvai's methods.²⁸

The GS system, based on pentatonicism, is equivalent to what Lendvai calls Bartók's 'chromatic' system. Directly opposing this chromaticism is "Bartókian diatonicism", which is based on the 'acoustic' scale, the scale Bartók found predominantly in Rumanian folk music but also in Slovakian folk music. It is named the 'acoustic' or 'overtone' scale because it outlines the first ten partials of the harmonic series:

Ex.7:(a) 'acoustic' scale



(b) 'acoustic' scale as used in a Rumanian folk song and instrumental piece.

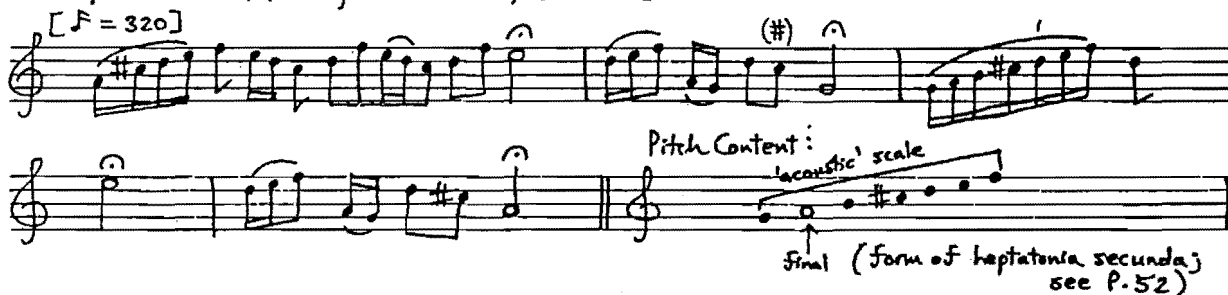
Lampert no. 233; Violin piece from Satu-Mare, Rumania.

$\text{♩} = 132$



Lampert no. 164; Song from Bihor, Rumania.

$[F = 320]$



According to Lendvai, Bartók derives melodic and harmonic material from this scale, forming a diatonic system that complements the pentatonic-based, 'chromatic' system. This diatonicism is often associated with the resolution of tension, as in the dance-like finales of

²⁸ Other musicologists have recognized this problem. See, for instance, Elliott Antokoletz's essay, "The Music of Bartók: Some Theoretical Approaches in the USA", *Studia Musicologica* v.24, supplement, 1982, p.69.

Bartók's dating from 1921 onwards. It is often associated with positive aspects (from Bartók's point of view) such as Nature, rural life and the unification of nations. This can be seen, for instance, in the finale of *Contrasts*, where the rustic dance music of Rumanian fiddlers is portrayed.

Lendvai's analyses always depend on the opposition between 'chromatic' and 'diatonic' systems in Bartók's music. This leads to inflexibility, as Gillies demonstrates in his review of Lendvai's *Workshop of Bartók and Kodály*. There are many examples to be found in Bartók's music where elements from both systems occur alongside each other. In addition to the prominent use of the 'acoustic' scale in *Contrasts*, III, for instance, pentatonic elements are also present, as we shall see. Bartók frequently derives the 1:2 model from the upper segment of the 'acoustic' scale (as in the finale of *VS1*, for example); and yet, according to Lendvai, these two scales come from opposing systems. Bartók's treatment and use of various melodic and harmonic resources cannot be confined to such a rigid outlook.

Therefore, in my analysis of the works under study, Lendvai's concepts and terminology are only applied where it is deemed appropriate. Those sections from the works under study which Lendvai discusses or uses as examples are also dealt with in Part Two. The most significant of these is the opening theme from the first movement of *PS* and in parts of *VS1*.

In comparison with Lendvai, János Kárpáti assumes a broader and more historically-minded view of Bartók's music. His main literary work is *Bartók's String Quartets* (1967) which was later revised to include other chamber works. The revised version, entitled *Béla Bartók Kamarazenéje* [Béla Bartók's Chamber Music] includes sections specifically dedicated to *VS1* and *Contrasts*, and these will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively, along with two further essays of Kárpáti's. However, his most important and extensively worked out ideas are to be found in the first part of *Bartók's String Quartets*, where he summarizes various aspects of Bartók's style in detail, including the influence of folk music.

The influence of folk music is given more weight in Kárpáti's analyses than in Lendvai's. Kárpáti traces this influence from its beginnings in simple folk music

arrangements through to the total absorption of folk elements in Bartók's style. He views the folk influence on three levels: (1) folk music as theme (2) folk music as idiom (3) folk music as ideology. Of interest is his statement that "...it is an absolutely subsidiary matter whether its [a piece by Bartók] basis is formed by an original melody or an imitation".²⁹ This is supported by Bartók's own statement that "There is no true difference between this method [imitating folk melody] and the one described above [setting an authentic folk melody]".³⁰ Therefore, Kárpáti's first category of folk influence, above, includes both authentic folk song arrangements and folk song imitations (or quasi-folk tunes). As we shall see, the works under study contain the latter only, as is the case in all Bartók's abstract works. If it did not matter whether a composition employed authentic or invented folk tunes, why then did Bartók deliberately not use authentic ones in abstract works? The examples in this thesis hope to show there are subtle differences between the two types, which lie in the various distancing devices Bartók uses which help to blend the folk-like melody into an abstract texture.

The second and third of Kárpáti's categories cover Bartók's assimilation of various folk music characteristics such as scales, scale fragments and intervals (as well as rhythmic elements) into his abstract compositional language. This is equivalent to the 'indirect' level of folk influence. Kárpáti does not attempt to formulate an all-embracing system; instead, he provides a detailed, scholarly description of the various elements of Bartók's style, under general headings. (There is considerable overlap among the chapters.) In addition to Hungarian pentatonic and modal resources, scales from other folk musics are examined, including those from the 'far East'- in particular, Arabic and Balinese folk music. From the former, Bartók found the 1:3 model (alternating semitones and minor thirds) and from the latter, the 1:4 model (the *melog*, consisting of alternating semitones and major thirds), although these scale were not extended over an octave. While the 1:4 model is not common in Bartók's music, the 1:3 model is of greater significance, and is included by Lendvai with the 1:2 and 1:5 models in his catalogue of artificial scales derived from GS intervals.

²⁹ János Kárpáti, *Bartók's String Quartets* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1960), p.95.

³⁰ BBE, "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music" (1931), p.343

Therefore, Lendvai suggests a different origin for the 1:3 model, in the pentatonicism of Hungary. Kárpáti also demonstrates that the 1:3 model appeared in the music of composers contemporary to Bartók and that this is also another possible originating source. In Bartók's music, the 1:3 model is used both in association with the imitations of Arabic folk music and as an abstract formula. No matter what the origins were, Bartók would have felt more justified in employing a particular scale such as the 1:3 model if it had a precedent in folk music.

Kárpáti views the 1:2 and 1:5 models as indirect descendants of the Eastern 1:3 and 1:4 models, in Bartók's music. Once again, these scales are used in association with quasi-Arabic or quasi-Eastern musical depictions (as we shall see in *Contrasts*, II) but appear more frequently as purely abstract pitch collections. The 1:2, 1:3 and 1:5 models are a manifestation of what Kárpáti calls the 'distance principle' (where the octave is divided into equal intervals), a feature of twentieth century music which contributed to the breaking down of traditional harmony and tonality.

As well as the Western European background, the 1:2 model can also be derived from other types of scales used by Bartók (such as the 'acoustic' scale). This point was made with regard to Lendvai. Therefore, we have to take care not automatically to ascribe a particular influence to these scales without regard for the context in which they occur.

The importance of the 'acoustic' scale in Bartók's music was mentioned in the review of Lendvai's writings. Kárpáti, along with other Hungarian musicologists, views this scale as one mode of an 'ultra diatonic' pitch collection called the *heptatonia secunda* (or 'second diatony').³¹ The intervallic pattern of the ordinary diatonic scale can be arranged in three basic ways:

heptatonia prima.....	T T S T T T S	(7 modes)
heptatonia secunda.....	T T T S T S T	(7 modes)
heptatonia tertia.....	T T T T S S T	(7 modes)

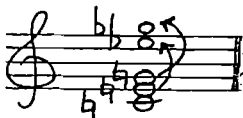
³¹ Lajos Bardos was the instigator of the concept of *heptatonia secunda*. See Somfai's essay, "Strategies of Variation in the Second Movement of Bartók's Violin Concerto 1937-38", *Studia Musicologica* v.19, 1977. pp.169-70.

T= tone, S= semitone.

The *heptatonia prima* include all the normal diatonic modes, namely the dorian, phrygian, mixolydian and so on. In addition to these, the modes of the *heptatonia secunda* also occur frequently in Bartók's music. In the example, above, the 'acoustic' scale is the first of the seven possible modes of the *heptatonia secunda*, but other modes are also present in Bartók's works, as we shall see.

One of the most noteworthy areas in Kárpáti's research concerns Bartók's use of 'polymodality' and other related technical devices. 'Polymodality', or 'bimodality', is a device Bartók himself described in the 'Harvard Lectures', as we saw earlier. In elaborating upon this topic, Kárpáti emphasizes the horizontal as well as the vertical application of this device - in other words, a single melodic line which encompasses different modes as opposed to bimodality between more than one part. In his lectures, Bartók provides several examples of the vertical type but none of the horizontal. The latter is only squeezed into the opening two paragraphs of the third lecture. Moving from the combination of different modes, Kárpáti discusses 'polymodal chromaticism', where a chromatic scale or segment is filled in by the use of complementary modal segments. He also mentions the possibility of symmetrical organisation of modes to generate new pitch resources. Closely related to polymodality is Kárpáti's concept of 'mistuning', a term he borrowed from Bence Szabolcsi. It refers to the altering of diatonic intervals by lowering or raising a pitch (or pitches) by a semitone. For example, a C major triad could be partially mistuned to produce the following pitch simultaneity:

Ex.8:



Likewise, folk modes and pentatonic scales can be treated in the same way:

Ex.9:



The phenomenon of 'mistuning' covers a wider area of pitch generation than polymodality or polymodal chromaticism. Non-diatonic scales such as the 1:3 model (and other distance models), 'alpha' harmonies and other triadic-type chords can all be explained with reference to 'mistuning', although whether this interpretation is really relevant in a particular movement or section or phrase depends on the context.

From a list of acoustic intervals and their 'mistuned' equivalents, Kárpáti comes to a description of major/minor and diatonic/chromatic duality, similar to Lendvai's diatonic/chromatic duality discussed earlier. However, Kárpáti states "...in Bartók diatony and chromaticism do not oppose one another".³² He shows how the acoustic and pentatonic worlds mix in Bartók's music without apparent dichotomy. Duality in Bartók's music is a result of "the acceptance and denial of the acoustic world"³³ - the denial involving the process of 'mistuning'.

Less impressive than his concept of 'mistuning' is Kárpáti's attempt to extend it (and polymodality) into polytonality. Bartók denied on several occasions that true polytonality could exist. In the second 'Harvard Lecture', he deals with this issue at length:³⁴

The same phenomenon appears when one deals with so-called polytonal music. Here, polytonality exists only for the eye when one looks at such music. But our mental hearing again will select one key as a fundamental key, and will project the tones of the other keys in relation to the one selected. The parts in different keys will be interpreted as consisting of altered tones of the chosen key.

Kárpáti acknowledges this and agrees that Bartók's music is always based on one central pitch. Despite this, he claims that Bartók's tonality is based on "polymodal polytonality

³² *Ibid.*, p.155.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.156.

³⁴ *BBE*, pp.365-366.

related to a common centre".³⁵ The simultaneous use of more than one scalar-type or mode (based on the final note or 'tonic') is a device adequately labelled polymodality. To split a texture up into parts, isolate the tonal implications of these separate parts and conclude that the texture therefore contains more than one tonality is an artificial analytical method, and seems to serve no purpose. When examining Bartók's tonality, we must always consider the relationship of the whole texture to a single central tone and, as we shall see, there are clues in Bartók's notation that help us establish tonal centres in complex polymodal, chromatic textures.

Finally, Kárpáti devotes a chapter to the important aspect of variation in Bartók's music, along with monothematicism. Variation is the life-blood of folk music. Bartók was aware of this and its impact on his music was great, by his own admission. In addition to this influence, Kárpáti outlines the significance of the variation principle in the Western art music tradition. Bartók inherited this, via composers such as Brahms and Liszt - as seen in his adaption of the contrasting two-movement form based on a single theme from Liszt's models. However, Kárpáti explores the variation principle well below the surface details of melodic, harmonic or rhythmic alterations. *String Quartet No.5*, for instance, would appear to be based on a fundamental scale or 'row'; "...virtually every melodic detail in the four [sic] movements of the work can be extracted from it"³⁶ While such all-embracing 'rows' do not appear to exist in the works under study, there are prominent intervals in *PS* and *Contrasts*, at least, which act as unifying agents. There is also a type of 'row' in the first two movements of *VS1*, but its significance is limited. The technique of variation and monothematicism through motivic development is discussed, once again assuming greater significance in the quartets than in the works under study.

Kárpáti deals more specifically with *VS1* and *Contrasts* in *Béla Bartók Kamarazenéje* [Béla Bartók's Chamber Music]. Although this has yet to be published into English, a translation of the relevant sections was made. The analysis of *VS1* is rather superficial but *Contrasts* is dealt with in greater detail. Kárpáti's ideas on harmonic and

³⁵ Kárpáti, *Bartók's String Quartets*, p.169.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.119.

tonal structures in this work are further elaborated on in a separate article, entitled "Alternative Structures in Bartók's Contrasts", which is discussed in Chapter 6.

If Kárpáti's approach to Bartók's music is broader than that of Lendvai's, then László Somfai's approach is possibly broader still, and typifies the more recent tendencies in Bartók research. While accepting many of Lendvai's and Kárpáti's ideas and terminology, Somfai's interpretations are also based on a wide and thorough knowledge of the primary sources available - the sketches of pieces, thematic memos, drafts, various editions, recordings etc., as well as Bartók's own literary writings. In an essay entitled "Manuscript Versus Urtext: The Primary Sources of Bartók's Music", Somfai sets out to provide us with "a theoretical acquaintance with the multiplicity and variety of the sources"³⁷ - theoretical because, as yet, most of Bartók's manuscripts still remain hidden from public view in the New York Archives. However, Somfai's analyses with the material available are penetrating. He attempts to encompass all the possible details and ideas which have relevance to the particular topic, and for this reason his studies are usually on specific subjects such as a single movement or episode from a work, or a group of sketches for a work. The essay dealing with the evolution of the finale of *PS* is one example, to which my own analysis is indebted.³⁸ When analysing Bartók's music, Somfai's intention is to reconstruct the creative process and thus come closer to the way Bartók himself viewed a piece. One of the virtues of his method is the care he takes to indicate where external, analytical methods or concepts go beyond Bartók's sphere of knowledge. This approach is important when it comes to considering the folk music influences on Bartók which could have resulted from his vast ethnomusicological experience. In his comprehensive analysis of the second movement of the *Violin Concerto 1937-38*, Somfai writes:³⁹

³⁷ Somfai, "Manuscript Versus Urtext: The Primary Sources of Bartók's Works", *Studia Musicologica* v.23, 1981, p.19.

³⁸ See Somfai, "A Zongoraszonáta finaléjának metamorfózisa" [Metamorphosis in the finale of the Piano Sonata], *Tizennyolc Bartók-tanulmány* [Eighteen Bartók Essays] (Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1980), pp.88-103.

³⁹ Somfai "Strategies of Variation in the Second Movement of Bartók's Violin Concerto 1937-38", *Studia Musicologica* v.19, 1977, p.164.

The inner demand that has most strongly motivated my research, however, arises from my firm conviction that in trying to understand Bartók's own compositional logic, we still take very little notice (or only on a most elemental grade) of these direct and indirect compositional impulses he gained in the course of classifying and analyzing the folk music of various peoples and with different methods, and which kept fermenting in him.

Therefore, Somfai's writings require of us a greater knowledge of Bartók's folk sources and ethnomusicological works than before. This is true at both the 'direct' and 'indirect' levels of folk music influence. In other words, in addition to identifying specific folk models that relate to a Bartók melody or idea, we must also consider other aspects of the folk material which may not be so obvious, such as a scalar pattern or the way Bartók notates a particular scale or Bartók's method of classifying scales, and so on. A firm chronological appreciation of Bartók's folk music research is also essential, as was shown in the 'Historical Background'.

Without the availability of all Bartók's manuscripts, a complete overview or theory of his music by Somfai is out of the question. In any case, Somfai believes that a greater contribution to Bartók literature can be made by avoiding general descriptions and concentrating on specifics, as has been stated already. Therefore, Somfai's output consists of separate essays and articles, eighteen of which have been collated into a single volume. In addition to this, he has been editor of the previous two volumes of *Documenta Bartokiana*, a periodical designed mainly to unearth and analyse previously unknown documents from Bartók's life (such as letters, articles, manuscripts, sketches, programmes, etc.). In volume 6 of this periodical, Vera Lampert's important catalogue of Bartók's folk sources for his arrangements appeared in German. In addition to the essays by Somfai mentioned already, there are others that have relevance as far as the works under study are concerned: the "Analytical Notes on Bartók's Piano Year 1926" (for *PS*), the 'commentary' to the facsimile edition of the second draft of *PS* and 'notes' to the recordings of *PS* and *Contrasts* all provide a wealth of valuable information and ideas. Lendvai's analysis of the first movement of *PS* prompted Somfai to respond with a formal analysis of his own, which is the subject of discussion in Chapters 5 and 9 of this thesis. Somfai's essays, "'Per finire': Some Aspects of the Finale in Bartók's Cyclic Form" and "A Characteristic Culmination Point in Bartók's Instrumental Forms" have a more indirect relevance to the

works under study. The former, in particular, is important in assessing the significance of folk music influences in the finales of the works under study.

In addition to his writings, my conversations with Dr. Somfai were of inestimable value to the formation of this thesis. Where an idea has arisen in the text from these conversations, acknowledgement is provided in the footnotes. Most significantly, it was at Somfai's suggestion that my topic was narrowed from a study of the folk music influence in Bartók's instrumental works (!) to a study of the folk music influence in *VS1*, *PS* and *Contrasts*.

A recent and different analytical approach to Bartók's music comes from the American, Elliott Antokoletz. His aim has been to show that Bartók's music is based on "...an all-encompassing system of pitch relations", which takes as its primary source, the Eastern European folk modes.⁴⁰ Although he employs concepts and terminology which are post-World War II, he does make use of Bartók's manuscripts to support his arguments. Unlike many other Western analysts, he takes full account of the influence of folk music as well as non-folk influences, and it is chiefly the former which will concern us here.⁴¹

Beginning with Bartók's harmonisations of authentic folk tunes, it is demonstrated how he derived modal-based harmony from the modal melodic material. The close relationship between the vertical and the horizontal is a most important aspect of Part Two of this thesis. Antokoletz then shows how the folk modes can be expressed as cycles of fifths (or fourths), and projected onto the pitch content of a particular passage, as shown in the following example:

⁴⁰Antokoletz, Elliott *The Music of Béla Bartók: A Study of Tonality and Progression in Twentieth Century Music*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), p.xii, preface.

⁴¹ It should be noted that in Antokoletz's major work, *The Music of Bartók: A Study of Tonality and Progression in Twentieth Century Music*, no mention is made of the works under study. A list of the works he cites is provided on p.329 of this book.

Ex.10: Symmetrical organisation of folk modes, exemplified in *String Quartet No.4, III*.

[A] Pentatonic scale

[B] Dorian mode

in fifths-cycle

[C] String Quartet No. 4, III
cello, bb. 10-11

Fifths-cycle outlined

Moreover, when a diatonic mode is expressed as a cycle of fifths it becomes symmetrical around a central pitch or axis. In Ex.10a, the pentatonic scale is symmetrical around G. (The Hungarian pentatonic scale on *la* and the dorian mode are both symmetrical in their scalar forms, also.) Bartók never indicated in his own writings that he consciously employed the folk modes in this symmetrical manner. Antokoletz takes as his point of departure the simple statement of Bartók's, that "The frequent repetition of this remarkable skip [the perfect fourth] occasioned the construction of the simplest fourth-chord". Antokoletz then adds, "This procedure transforms the diatonic mode into symmetrical pitch constructions".⁴² As a simple example of this, it is demonstrated how the modal pitch-content of an authentic folk tune is reordered in perfect fourths by Bartók, in *Improvisations*, V. The perfect fourths derive from an extension of the final line of the folk tune:

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.51.

Ex.11: Symmetrical organisation of folk modes in *Improvisations*, No.5.

folk tune, bb. 13-20 (without decoration, accompaniment)

sempre *f*

symmetrical around C^\sharp

symmetrical around C/D (or C^\sharp)

G aeolian reordered in P.4s

Pitch content of folk tune

G aeolian reordered in fifth-cycle

This type of symmetrical organisation of folk modes does not frequently occur in the works under study, as we shall see. There are several passages which display symmetrical properties but these are not usually associated with folk modes.

In works where folk modes are used in an abstract manner, Antokoletz's redistribution of the pitch content into symmetrical cycles can sometimes seem artificial, and unwarranted by the context. For example, in the following polymodal passage from *String Quartet No.4*, Antokoletz redistributes a pentatonic collection on G^\flat into cycles of perfect fifths. In this new form, the pentatonic collection becomes symmetrical around A^\flat . The same process is applied to the complementary 'white-note' collection (C-D-E-F-G-A-B) which becomes symmetrical around D^\sharp :

Ex.12: *String Quartet No.4*, III, bb.50-5, pitch analysis based on Antokoletz's analysis.

The image displays a musical score and a corresponding pitch analysis. The top section is a musical score for String Quartet No. 4, III, measures 50-55. The score is in G-flat major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It features a 'poco allargando' section followed by 'a tempo'. The bottom section shows a pitch analysis of the G-flat pentatonic scale (G-flat, A-flat, B-flat, C, D-flat) and its reordering in fifth-cycle symmetry around A-flat and D-flat. The analysis includes a 'C major' scale and a 'C tonality' label.

The problem with Antokoletz's interpretation is that the G^b pentatonic chords and modal melodic lines are not arranged in a symmetrical fashion by Bartók - this process is performed by Antokoletz, himself. The only explicitly symmetrical elements in the extract above are the chromatic dialogue between the second violin and viola in bb.52-4 (symmetrical around the tonic dyad, C-E) and the two perfect fifths G^b - D^b and A^b - E^b in bb.47-51 (symmetrical around E^b/F^b). Therefore, whether or not Antokoletz is justified in interpreting this passage as being symmetrical around D^b - A^b is debatable, despite the prominence of this tritone in this movement, generally.

From the symmetrical organisation of folk modes as contained in authentic or imitated folk tunes, Antokoletz progresses to a description of Bartók's use of abstract pitch-cells. He seeks to demonstrate how these pitch-cells are organised so as to generate complete interval cycles and create axes of symmetry, which are synonymous with tonal

centres. Antokoletz's methods and findings are complex and there is not sufficient space for us to discuss them in detail. One point of concern the author possesses is the tendency in some analyses to fall short of fulfilling the basic aim of finding an 'all-embracing system' of pitch organisation in Bartók's music. In the opening six bars of *String Quartet No.4*, for instance, Antokoletz's analysis of the axes of symmetry fails to include all the pitches present. The omitted pitches are not isolated in any way from the rest of the phrase.⁴³

Ex.13: *String Quartet No.4*, I, bb.1-6 Antokoletz's-analysis.

The image shows a musical score for the first six bars of the first movement of Bartók's String Quartet No. 4. The score is for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. It is marked 'Allegro (♩=110)'. The analysis shows various axes of symmetry (X-3, X-0, X-9, X-8) and sums (sum 9, sum 3) applied to the pitches. A circled area in the Viola part is labeled 'L.N. X-8'.

Antokoletz's ideas on tonality raise another point of concern. His proposition is that tonality is established both through traditional means and the presence of an axis of symmetry. While this is undoubtedly true in certain cases, there are occasions when the axis of symmetry does not contribute towards creating a tonal centre. Referring again to the third movement of *String Quartet No.4*, Antokoletz states that the basic tonality is D, with D/G# being the axis of symmetry in the middle section.⁴⁴ As we saw earlier, the symmetrical analysis of bb.47-55 of the middle section is artificial, and the stated axis, D/G# certainly does not contribute towards establishing a tonal centre. From my own analysis, it seems

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Ex.182.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.167.

that G is the basic tonal centre in the polymodal texture in bb.47ff, progressing to a clear C in bb.54-5 (see Ex.13), while the overall tonality of the movement is based on A. This pitch is established as the tonic through register (its placement at the bottom of the opening and closing chords) as well as melodic considerations (the folklike cadence figures in the cello part; bb.13 and 57, for instance).

Another recent approach to Bartók's tonality and modality has been made by the Australian, Malcolm Gillies. Drawing on Bartók's academic and ethnomusicological writings from the 1940s, he proposes a comprehensive theory for identifying tonal and modal arrangements in Bartók's last works (1943-5). Since this theory concerns a part of Bartók's career not directly relevant to the works under study, it can only be used cautiously in this thesis. However, some points seem applicable, especially to the relatively late work, *Contrasts*.

The starting point for Gillies' theory is his definition of tonality and modality, based on Bartók's own observations in the 'Harvard Lectures' (1943):⁴⁵

Tonality as used most broadly in Bartók's 'Harvard Lectures' refers to the operation of a single tone over a section of music to which all other tones resolve in actuality or potentiality. *Modality* in its widest usage refers to the range of scalar forms which can be based on this single tone.

Of the various modal forms used by Bartók, pentatonicism and modal chromaticism (in the general sense) are the most widely used in his music. The latter includes three types of chromaticism which we have already encountered in the description of the 'Harvard Lectures': bi-modality, modal chromaticism and the new chromaticism.⁴⁶ Bartók's use of these types is complex (as we shall see in this thesis) and determining tonal centres is often difficult. From 1928 (and possibly earlier) he declared his music to be always tonal, but he never described his method of identifying tonal centres, beyond some generalities.⁴⁷ In attempting to formulate a method, Gillies pays close attention to Bartók's notational

⁴⁵ Malcolm Gillies, "Bartók's Last Works: A Theory of Tonality and Modality", *Musicology* v.7, 1982, p.120.

⁴⁶ See pp.38-9.

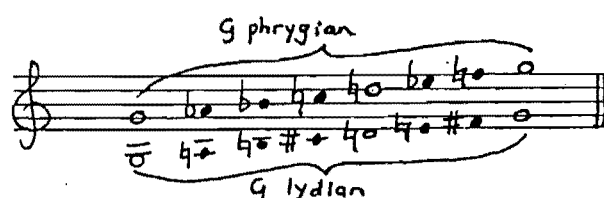
⁴⁷ See, for instance, the quotation from the 'Harvard Lectures' on p.53 of this 'Review', in which Bartók describes the aural perception of supposedly 'polytonal' music.

practices, in compositions and in folk music transcriptions, and draws on Wallace Berry's concept of 'encirclement' as an analytical tool.⁴⁸

In Gillies' theory, there are four means of tonal identification. The first concerns the three types of chromaticism described above. One of the 'classic' examples of bimodal chromaticism which Bartók alludes to in the 'Harvard Lectures' and which Gillies uses in his theory is the combination of lydian and phrygian modes based on the same pitch. This particular combination occurs on several occasions in Bartók's music:

⁴⁸ See Wallace Berry, *Structural Functions in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

Ex.14:



The only degrees of the scale to appear in one form are the fundamental tone G, and the fifth, D. These tones are the points of coincidence between the lydian and phrygian modes and are 'encircled' by upper and lower leading-notes ($F\sharp + A^b$ for G and $C\sharp + E^b$ for D), to adopt Wallace Berry's term. Although the complete chromatic collection is covered, the diatonic function of each pitch remains intact; thus, $C\sharp$ still acts as the characteristic fourth degree of the lydian mode, and not as a chromatically altered form of C^{\sharp} . Gillies describes both G and D in Ex.14 as fundamental tones. Deciding which of these is the primary fundamental tone (or tonic) and which is secondary depends on other factors beyond the notation, such as range, accentuation, use of pedal-notes, etc.⁴⁹ Therefore, this can be a guide to determining tonal and modal centres in Bartók's music.⁵⁰

The principle of fundamental tones encircled by modal leading-notes also appears in Bartók's late folk music transcriptions. The final or (almost always) fundamental note is very rarely altered chromatically. The exception to this rule occurs in ornamental figures, notated with small note-heads, where the particular melody note that the ornaments are attached to is encircled. If the melody note is the second degree of the scale, for instance, then it is possible to have a sharpened form of the first degree as an ornamental note, leading upwards to this melody note. This secondary level of modal activity is exemplified in the following:

⁴⁹ Although the first and fifth degrees are most often the fundamental tones in the notation of such modal chromatic textures, other degrees can also be encircled; for example, the first and third degrees, as in the following scale: $\underline{G} - A^b - A^{\sharp} - \underline{B}^b - C^b - C^{\sharp} - D^b - D^{\sharp} - E^b - E^{\sharp} - F - F\sharp$.

⁵⁰ Adopting this part of Gillies theory, we can better explain the pitch content of the opening two bars of Bartók's *String Quartet No.4* (shown in Ex.13) as being a mixture of C lydian (cello, C - A - $F\sharp$ - D - B, vln.1, $F\sharp$ - D - C - G) and C phrygian (vln.2, F - E^b - D - B b), with the D \sharp in vln.1 temporarily encircling the third degree, E^{\sharp} .

Ex.15: Extract from a Rumanian folk song; *RFM* 2, no.548 (transcription probably completed in the 1940s)



The parallel between Bartók's notational practices in his folk music transcriptions and compositions cannot be called a folk music influence, but it is a product of his ethnomusicological experience.

In addition to the identification of fundamental tones by encirclement, there are further "guiding rules of notational analysis".⁵¹ First, changes in the notation of a pitch in a modal collection indicates a change in one or both fundamental tones - for example, if an A# replaced B^b in Ex.14 then a change in the fundamental tone G is implied since we cannot have three forms of A (A^b A[#], A#) in the same context, and thus making it necessary to have a G#. Second, in chromatic passages Bartók's notation is consistent in the melodic rather than the harmonic sense, reflecting his increasing preference from 1926 onward for the horizontal over the vertical in terms of texture.

The three other ways of defining tonal centres which Gillies outlines are: one, by analysis of 'leading-note motions'⁵² (where fundamental tones are identified by upper or lower leading-notes); two, by range of melody or harmony; and three, by other means (including the use of major/minor chords, traditional harmonic relationships, rhythmic features, dynamics, pedal-notes, reiterations and accentuation). His theory encompasses modulation and the various levels of tonal activity in Bartók's music, employing the ideas described above. Aspects of this theory have been adopted where it seems particularly relevant (again, mainly in *Contrasts*).

There are numerous other analytical studies made by various authors which employ ideas or methods not mentioned so far. Those relevant to the topic and the works under study will be discussed during the course of the chapters that follow. It should be reiterated

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, p.123 for the list of five "guiding rules of notational analysis".

⁵² This is Gillies' preferred term of recent times; in the essay cited above, he also uses the term 'half-encirclement' (as opposed to normal 'encirclement' by both upper and lower leading-notes).

that not all the relevant studies could be taken into account owing to the language barrier. One particular example of this is the writings of Illka Oramo (Finland) whose examination of modal symmetry in Bartók's music may well have been of use in this thesis.⁵³ Some analytical approaches were more or less rejected, such as the lengthy dissertation on the *Second Sonata* for violin and piano by András Szentkirályi which analyses the work using Lendvai's Golden Section principles.⁵⁴

The Sources of Non-Folk Music Influences

In the course of this thesis, a distinction is frequently made between those elements of Bartók's style which originate in folk music and those derived from elsewhere. This is an important distinction, yet, owing to the variety of sources in Bartók's music, it is often difficult to separate elements that have a folk basis from those that do not. Without attempting a summary of all the possible non-folk influences, there are two main areas which are well exemplified by the works under study: (1) the influence of contemporary art music and (2) the influence of the *verbunkos*. The former is well covered by many of the authors discussed above - specific examples of influences on the works under study will be examined in the course of the thesis. The latter is an Hungarian art music genre with roots in folk music, and makes its appearance in *Contrasts* (see Chapter 3). In addition to the information on the *verbunkos* provided in the secondary sources (such as the 'notes' the recordings of the works under study), important material is contained in Szabolcsi's *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, Sárosi's *Gypsy Music* and Bónis's essay, "Bartók

⁵³ See Oramo's articles, "Modale Symmetrie bei Bartók", *Die Musikforschung* v.33, 1980, pp.450-64, and "Marcia und Burletta Zur Tradition der Rhapsodie in Zwei Quartettsätzen Bartóks", *Die Musikforschung* v.30, 1977, pp.14-25. The latter was roughly translated, and is mentioned in ch.3.

⁵⁴ Szentkirályi, András *Bartók's Second Sonata for Violin and Piano 1922*, Ph.D diss., (Princeton University, 1976).

und der Verbunkos".⁵⁵ Bartók's own writings on Hungarian art music and the performing role of the gipsies clearly makes the distinction between this source and authentic folk music. However, he never discusses his revival of the *verbunkos* tradition - the only direct information he provides us with is the titles of the movements in *Contrasts* ("Verbunkos", "Pihenő" and "Sebes") Therefore, we have to rely on secondary sources in our analysis of the *verbunkos* elements in this work.

⁵⁵ Bónis's essay is included in the *International Musicological Conference in Commemoration of Béla Bartók 1971*, ed. József Ujfalussy and János Breuer (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1972).

CHAPTER 1

THE IMITATION OF FOLK SONG AND INSTRUMENTAL VERSIONS OF FOLK SONG IN THE PIANO SONATA AND CONTRASTS.

Both Béla Bartók and his compatriot Zoltán Kodály considered that folk song contained the essence of their folk music culture. In a recent essay by the Hungarian musicologist, Balint Sárosi, the author writes, "...Kodály as an ethnomusicologist considered folksong far more valuable and significant than instrumental music, and as far as Hungarian folk music was concerned Bartók concurred."¹ Kodály placed Hungarian folk song at the heart of his educational system. He devotes only one chapter to instrumental folk music in his book, *Folk Music of Hungary*, while Bartók's chief publication of Hungarian folk music, *HFS*, is as the title suggests solely concerned with the vocal medium. Most of Bartók's essays in this area are about folk song.² The reason for this bias is due to the survival of Hungarian folk music in mainly vocal forms. When Bartók and Kodály began collecting in 1906, vocal music was generally less contaminated by foreign influences than instrumental music.³ Added to this, Hungarian instrumental pieces were simply versions of

¹ Balint Sárosi "Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály's Works. The Galánta and Marosszék Dances", *Studia Musicologica*, v.25, 1983, p.23.

² See *BBE*. Of the ethnomusicological essays in this volume, only one concerns instrumental folk music, entitled "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe".

³ When discussing the dominance of gipsy violinists in rural areas, Kodály concluded "... in instrumental folk music peasants have long since strayed away from the original lines of folk culture - a state of musical self-sufficiency". Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1960), p.127.

folk songs, aside from '*aprája*' which were improvised interludes.⁴ From his early experiences of Hungarian, Slovakian and Rumanian folk music Bartók was able to write in 1911, "...the beginning of all forms of music was vocal music which for long remained the only vehicle for man's musical expression."⁵ Therefore, any general study of the folk influence on Bartók's compositions should begin with folk song. Despite the huge body of instrumental music he collected in Rumania (and other countries), the music of his native country remained most important to him. For instance, in a letter written in 1930, Bartók describes the poly-national influences in his music and concludes, "...the Hungarian influence is the strongest".⁶ This is confirmed in the *PS* and *Contrasts* which contain between them six folk song imitations, five displaying Hungarian characteristics, as we shall see. (*VSI*, on the other hand contains no folk song imitations although the finale employs instrumental genres.)

Before discussing folk song imitations in the works under study, however, we must penetrate the essential characteristics of Hungarian folk song itself, as Bartók described them. In *HFS*, he selects three hundred and twenty strophic items as representative of a collection of over a thousand folk songs, dividing them into three main categories: the 'Old' style, the 'New' style and the 'Miscellaneous' style. Classification is based on a system invented by the Finnish folklorist, Professor Ilmari Krohn.⁷ All characteristics such as scale, range, pitch-level at line-ends (caesuras), rhythm, number of syllables per line, form, verse variants, performance peculiarities and so on are examined. Bartók applied this system (with slight modifications) to his other folk music collections as well, but made changes after the publication of *HFS* (1924). The details of the system are outlined on pages 6-10 of

⁴ For a more complete description of the '*aprája*', see *BBE*, "The folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", pp.252-3.

⁵ The quotation from Bartók's essay, "The Folklore of Instrumental Music in Hungary"(1911) is taken from Sárosi's essay, "Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály's Works. The Galánta and Marosszék Dances", *op.cit.*, p.23.

⁶ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.201.

⁷ For a description of this system, see *HFS*, pp.6-11. Bartók's own reference for Professor Krohn's system is *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, iv. 4, 1903.

Bartók's Introduction. An example of Hungarian folk song from group 'A' (the 'Old' style) of the collection can be seen in Ex.1:

Ex.1: 'Old' style Hungarian folk song; *HFS*, no.18.

Tempo giusto, $\text{♩} = 100$. Muz. F. 1332 b; II. Ipolyság (Hont), 1910.; B.

18. 

Föl-mén-tem a szil-va-fá-ra, El-re-pedt a ga-tyám szí-ra.

Hú-szul b..... az ír-gal-mót, Maj még-varr-ja az én bu-bám.

This song is strophic in form, comprising four lines to each verse - a typical feature of Hungarian folk song. It is an 'Old' style song mainly because its scale has a strong pentatonic basis. Although the dorian mode is used, there are five main pitches in the melody (G-B^b-C-D-F), with the two extra ones acting as passing notes. This semitoneless, pentatonic scale is a characteristic of Hungarian folk song and is also very important in Bartók's music. On p.18 of the Introduction, he gives examples of various pentatonic turns of phrase in 'Old' style songs. As we shall see, the folk song influence in his music is sometimes only present in melodic turns such as these (the tonal background in the following examples is always G):

Ex.2: Pentatonic turns; *HFS*, p.18.



It was rarely that Bartók found a purely pentatonic tune. Such items existed among the isolated Székely people from Transylvania (now part of Rumania) and were very old in origin. In the majority of pentatonic-based melodies, passing notes were usually added between the five main pitches (as in Ex.1), producing the dorian, aeolian or phrygian modes. Mixolydian and major modes arose when the third and/or the seventh degree of the scale were altered:

Ex.3: Modes used in Hungarian folk song and their derivation from the pentatonic scale.



The mixolydian/major scales are characteristic of Transdanubian folk music in Bartók's collection. The alteration of the third and seventh degrees is sometimes not complete, producing unstable pitches, or the occurrence of both raised and 'normal' forms of the degree in the one tune. Even a seemingly incidental feature such as this had an influence on Bartók's music, as we shall see.

Whereas most 'Old' style songs have a *parlando rubato* character, Ex.1 is in strict time (*tempo giusto*), which might associate it with dancing, as Bartók suggests.⁸ The figures, $\overline{7} \overline{3} \overline{1}$, indicate the pitch level of the melody at the end of lines, relative to the tonic or final note. 3 is most common at the end of line two, while 7 and 1 at the ends of line 1 and 3, respectively, are less common.⁹ The form of Ex.1 is described by Bartók as

⁸ See *HFS*, Appendix 3, p.342, under 'Remarks', shown in Ex.3 of the present chapter.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

Therefore, the range of a ninth in Ex.1 is indicated by the numerals, VII-8, as we can see in the following copy of the first page of Bartók's chart:

Ex.5: Analytical chart of Hungarian folk songs; *HFS*, p.342.

Melody No.	Syllabic Structure	Last Note of Sections	Range	Rhythm Schema*	Content Structure	Remarks
A. OLD STYLE MELODIES						
I. Eight- or Twelve-Syllable Text Lines						
1.	12.	b3 b3 4	VII-7		AABB _v	Pentatonic base. Doubtful Class A structure.
2.	12.	5 b3 1	I-5		ABCC _v	Pure pentatonic scale. Cf. Nos. 16, 59.
3.	12.	5 b3 b3	VII-8		ABBC	Pure pentatonic scale.
4.	12.	5 4 5	I-5		ABCD	Pentatonic base. Descending sequence structure.
5.	12.	4 b3 b2	I-7		ABCD	Descending sequence structure. Cf. Nos. 23, 62.
6.	12.	7 5 b3	I- b10		ABCD	Pentatonic base. A'A traces.
7a.	8.	1 1 1	VII-8		AABC	A'A traces.
7b.	8.	1 1 1	I-8		AABC	Ornamented pentatonic scale. A'A traces.
7c.	12.	8 1 1	I-8		ABBC	
8.	8.	1 1 5	VII-8		AABC	A'A traces.
9.	8.	1 1 5	I-8		AABC	This and No. 18 the only known eight-syllable old-style melodies with heterorhythmic sections. Mixolydian—perhaps not Class A? A'A traces. Match-making song.
10.	8.	4 1 1	I-8		ABBC	Pentatonic base. Cf. No. 70.
11a.	8.	4 1 2	I-8	4(a)4.	ABCB	Dance (bagpipe) tune. Cf. No. 159.
11b.	8.	4 1 5	I-8	4(a)4.	ABCB	Same remarks as to No. 11a.
12.	8.	1 b3 1	I-8		ABBC	Ornamented pentatonic scale.
13.	8.	1 b3 4	VII-8	4(a)4.	ABCD	Phrygian. Dance tune.
14.	8.	b3 b3 b3	I-8		ABCD	
15.	8.	4 b3 4	VII-8		ABCD	Pentatonic structure (the variant form shows the pure pentatonic scale). A'A traces.
16.	8.	5 b3 4	VII-8		ABCD	Pentatonic base. Cf. Nos. 1, 59.
17.	8.	5 b3 b3	VII-7		ABCD	Pentatonic base.
18.	8.	7 b3 1	VII-8		AA _v BB _v	Pentatonic base. Probably a dance tune. A'A traces. Cf. Nos. 7, 9, 74.
19.	8.	7 b3 b3	I-8		ABBC	Ornamented pentatonic scale.
20.	8.	8 b3 b3	VII-8		ABCD	A'A traces. Cf. No. 23.
21.	8.	8 b3 4	I-9		A'B'AB	Ornamented pentatonic scale.
22.	8.	4 4 1	I-8		ABCD	
23.	8.	8 4 b3	I-9		ABCD	Descending sequence structure. Cf. Nos. 4, 5, 20, 62.
24.	8.	b3 5 4	VII-8		ABCD	A'A traces.

*The symbols appearing in this column refer to the Index of Rhythm Schemata on pp. 362-66.

In the above, there is a column for 'Rhythm Schema' and a reference to an "Index of Rhythm Schemata", to be found further on in the book. Bartók's analyses according to rhythm also has significance in his manipulation of quasi-folk material, as we shall see.

As was stated earlier, Hungarian instrumental folk music consists of versions of folk songs, plus the occasional *aprāja*, a sort of interlude based on the free use of melodic motives. The following bagpipe piece is a version of the song in Ex.1 (without interludes).

Ex.6: Hungarian bagpipe item; quoted in "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", *BBE*, p.257, Ex.25.



The idiosyncratic features of instruments and their music are used by Bartók in *PS*, as a way of varying his quasi-folk melody. The close relationship between Hungarian folk song and instrumental music makes it necessary for us to include a description of the latter in this chapter, especially with regard to *PS*, III.

From this brief summary of Hungarian folk song as Bartók saw it a consideration of how he imitates its characteristics follows.

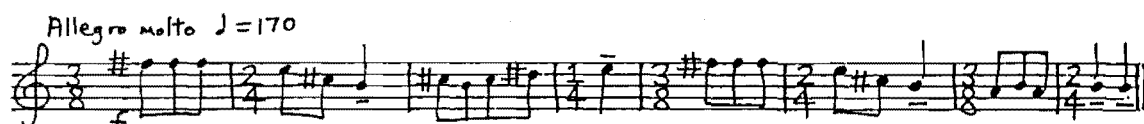
PIANO SONATA: MOVEMENT THREE

The finale of the *PS* contains a close imitation of Hungarian folk song. This quasi-folk tune occurs in the first episode of this rondo movement, as a variation on the rondo theme. The melodic line of the rondo theme also has characteristics from folk music but they are distanced by various devices as we shall see. In an essay on this movement, László Somfai gives a version of how an authentic Hungarian folk song would be, based on Bartók's quasi-folk tune.¹² All three versions, the quasi-folk tune, the rondo theme and

¹² László Somfai "A Zongoraszonáta Finaléjának Metamorfózisa" [Metamorphosis in the final of the Piano Sonata], *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanulmány* [Eighteen Bartók-Essays], p.93.

Somfai's 'authentic' folk tune, are presented below to facilitate comparison. We can see from this the 'vocal' quality of Bartók's quasi-folk tune; as Somfai says, it imitates a "...strident *vocal* performance without ornaments".¹³ (The episode consists of two 'verses' of the quasi-folk tune; the first has long held notes at the end of each line, and is not included in the following example.)

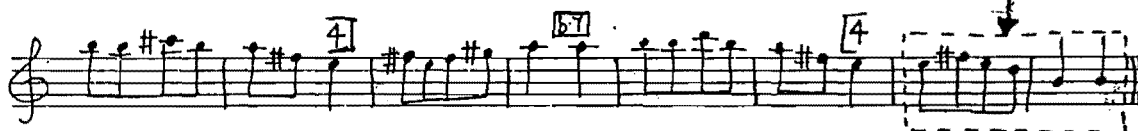
Ex.7: (a) *PS*, III, Melodic line of the rondo theme, bb.1-8.



(b) *PS*, III, 'vocal' version of the rondo theme, bb.76-83.



(c) Somfai's version of an equivalent 'authentic' Hungarian folk tune.



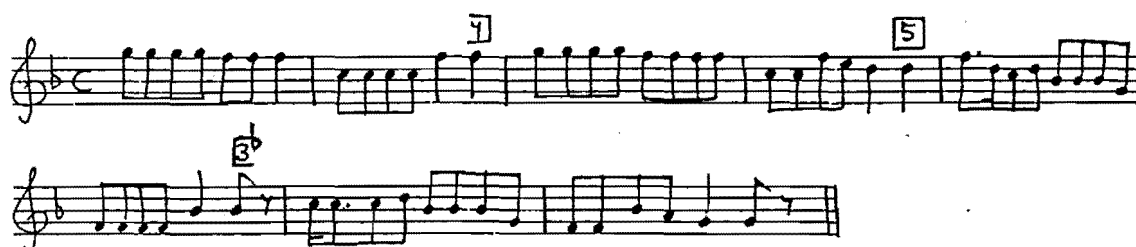
The *sforzando* on the chord in the quasi-folk tune possibly depicts an excited shout from the imaginary folk singer - there is a reason for suggesting this, as we shall see. The only other difference between this tune and Somfai's authentic version is the 'slip' down a major second of the final 'line' so that the former ends on A instead of B. This alteration produces an extension to the otherwise modal scale and encompasses a form of the *heptatonia secunda* (the fifth mode), a scale Bartók was particularly fond of, as we saw in the 'Review' Another way this tune is distanced is by the tempo - ♩ = 184 is an unrealistic speed for the average folk singer, as Somfai points out.¹⁴

¹³ Béla Bartók *Zongoraszonáta* (1926) [Sonata for Piano Solo] Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1980). See the 'Commentary' by László Somfai.

¹⁴ Somfai *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanulmány*, op. cit., p.95.

Several characteristics of Hungarian folk song we observed earlier can be seen in the quasi-folk tune. It uses the dorian mode (incomplete) with a strong pentatonic basis (B-D-E-F#-A), discounting for the meantime the 'slip down' of a second in the last 'line'. The range is large; VII-10, or an octave and a fourth, and the melody line descends in characteristic fashion. Also typical is the cadential rhythm, ♩. This melody is similar in style to the so-called 'swineherd's songs' of Hungary, of which the following is an example, from Kodály's collection:¹⁵

Ex.8: Hungarian folk tune; from Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary* (collected in 1934) (author's analysis).



The 'swineherd's songs' are dance tunes. They are always in *tempo giusto* with a metre of 2/4, and rhythmically pulsating. While dancing to these tunes, the peasants would frequently sing or recite 'dance' words. In the excitement of the dance, the words would be shouted, a feature that Bartók is probably referring to with the *sforzando* in his quasi-folk tune, as was suggested (see Ex.7). If there is a similarity between the first two lines of this example and Bartók's quasi-folk tune then the similarity is even more pronounced in the following variant which Kodály also quotes in his book:¹⁶

¹⁵ Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, p.29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.32.

Ex.9: Hungarian folk tune; from Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary* (author's analysis).



Bartók cannot have used Ex.8 as his model because it was collected eight years after he wrote the sonata. As no date of collection is attached to Ex.9, it is not possible to say whether or not this influenced Bartók's melody. In any case, there are several variants of the tunes above, as Kodály shows, and Bartók is certain to have heard one such variant in his twelve or so years of collecting. It is not difficult to support such an assumption. One of the folk songs Bartók arranges in his series of piano pieces, *For Children* (1908-1909), bears a strong resemblance to the quasi-folk tune in the sonata, especially with his slight modifications of the melody in lines 3 and 4.¹⁷ In the example below, both the Old style folk song from Bartók's collection and his modified version from *For Children* are shown:¹⁸

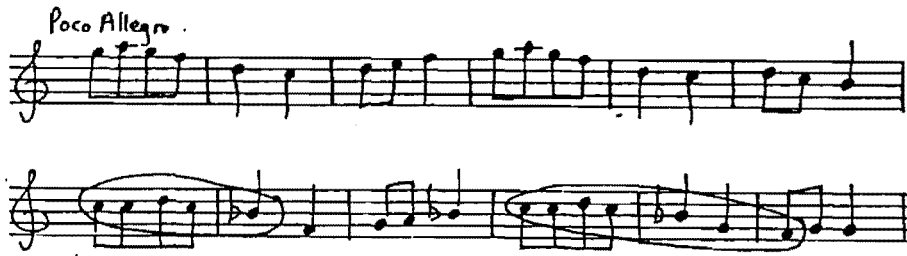
Ex.10: (a) Hungarian folk tune: *HFS*, no.74a.



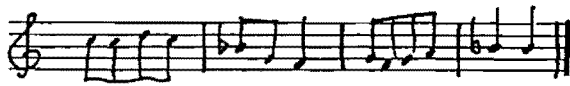
¹⁷ The melody in Ex.1 also bears a resemblance to Bartók's quasi-folk tune.

¹⁸ This folk song and its setting by Bartók are used as examples in I. Olsvai's essay, "West-Hungarian (Transdanubian) Features in Bartók's Works", *Studia Musicologica* v.11, 1969. According to Bartók's terminology, \circ indicates "a slight extension of [time] value" (see *HFS*, p.195); no explanation is provided for the use of quaver rests over the bar-line, but presumably these signify a pause or silence between lines.

(b) Bartók's arrangement of the melody above in *For Children*, v.1, no.20 (melodic line only).



(c) First two 'lines' of 'vocal' version from *PS*, III, transposed a M.7 down, simplified.



In his essay on the influence of *colinde* rhythms in Bartók's music, Breuer makes a parallel between the following "well known" Hungarian folk melody and Bartók's rondo theme:¹⁹

Ex.11: Hungarian folk tune; quoted in Breuer's "Kolinde Rhythm in Bartók's Music".



The chief difference between these possible models and Bartók's melody is the brevity of the latter. It is, in fact, half as long as an authentic folk melody should be. It still comprises four phrases, but in terms of authentic folk melody, only two complete 'lines' are present. (Compare Ex.7 with the examples following.) Bartók has a precedent in his Hungarian folk music collection for doing this - namely, the dance tunes in *kolomeika* rhythm, of Ukrainian or Ruthenian origin and represented in *HFS* by sub-class V and group 10 of sub-class III

¹⁹ Janós Breuer "Kolinde Rhythm in Bartók's Music" *Studia Musicologica* v.17, 1975, p.56, from Ex.18.

from the 'Miscellaneous' Class (group C).²⁰ These melodies are related to the 'swineherd's songs' mentioned earlier. According to Bartók, when the *kolomeïka* tunes first appeared in Hungary they consisted of two melody lines (with the form AB) and had the following rhythm schema:

²⁰ See *HFS*, pp.73-5, for Bartók's description of these tunes.

Ex.12: Rhythm schema from *HFS*.

2
4

line 1

line 2

Songs were collected which contained rhythmic variations on the above schema like the following, quoted by Bartók in *HFS*. One of these variations is identical to the rhythm of the quasi-folk tune in the sonata. After the schema, two *kolomeïka* melodies which use this rhythm are cited:

Ex.13: (a) Rhythm schema for the *kolomeïka* melodies, in *HFS*.

2
4

(b) Hungarian folk tune; *HFS* no.256.

Tempo giusto, J = 100

(c) Hungarian folk tune; *HFS* no.301.

Tempo giusto, J = 110

Of interest in Ex.13b are the Hungarian text and Bartók's caesura markings which show that the original 2-line tune is divided into four 'half-lines'. This makes an exact parallel with the

form of Bartók's quasi-folk tune. We can conclude that if Bartók's tune had words it would have the same syllabic pattern as the melody in Ex.11, namely 7676. Using Bartók's system of symbols from *HFS*, this syllabic pattern belongs to the group Z z Z z, where Z represents the line with the greater number of syllables and z, the smaller number.²¹ In this group, the patterns 7676 and 8686 are most common. It is significant that in the whole of the 'Miscellaneous' class the pattern, Z z Z z, occurs in melodies with *kolomeika* rhythm.²² Therefore, drawing on his experience as an ethnomusicologist, it would appear Bartók has derived his line-length and rhythmic patterns of his quasi-folk tune from these *kolomeika* melodies.

While he may have found these features worthy of imitation, other aspects of the melodies in group 10 of sub-Class III seem not to have impressed him, observing that "...their structure lacks unity, and therefore their significance as regards the Hungarian fund is very slight".²³ However, the *kolomeika* melodies from group V of the 'Miscellaneous' Class he considered to be more characteristically Hungarian, with strongly pentatonic features. He writes, "This group of tunes ... stands very close to the Old style, and indeed might be considered as belonging to it".²⁴ Because of the rarity of their form (AABB) in the old style and "the alien origin of the tunes", Bartók placed them in the 'Miscellaneous' Class. When revising the Hungarian collection in the 1930s, however, these tunes were promoted to the 'Old' style.²⁵ This reflects Bartók's favourable opinion of these tunes, as does the fact that he arranged three of the items from *HFS* in separate works from different stages in his

²¹ See *HFS*, part III of the 'Miscellaneous' Class (group C), p.64ff. This syllabic system only applies to melodies with heterometric lines. (i.e. melodies whose lines differ in the number of syllables.)

²² See *HFS*, nos.256-60. In Bartók's complete collection there are forty-six tunes like this.

²³ *HFS*, p.76. In *Folk Music of Hungary*, published thirteen years after Bartók's book, Kodály proves that the theory about the influence of *kolomeika* melodies on Hungarian ones is faulty and claims the influence is more likely to have worked the other way around. (See *Folk Music of Hungary*, pp.98-9) Naturally, this did not affect the way Bartók viewed the melodies.

²⁴ *HFS*, p.74.

²⁵ See *HFS*, editor's preface, pp.xl-xliii.

career.²⁶ Therefore, Bartók is not unlikely to have imitated the *kolomeika* melodies from group V in *HFS* in an abstract work.²⁷

As we saw above, Bartók's quasi-folk tune comprises four 'half-lines'. This produces the form ABAC which is not typical of the *kolomeika* melodies (or other Hungarian types). If we view the melody as comprising just two 'lines' of an Hungarian-converted *kolomeika* tune, then the form is AA^v or AB. By following the precedent set by the 'swineherd's songs', these two-lines could be repeated a P.5 down, producing the form A⁵A^{v5}AA or A⁵B⁵AB:

Ex.14: Hypothetically 'doubled' version of 'vocal' version from *PS*, III.



This form is typical in 'Old' style Hungarian folk song. Bartók describes the form, A⁵B⁵AB, as "...a remarkable structure, particularly characteristic of Hungarian peasant music".²⁸ A⁵A⁵AA also occurs, an example being the *kolomeika* melody No.302 from *HFS*. Therefore, the formal aspect of Bartók's quasi-folk melody has a basis in this type of Hungarian folk song.

²⁶ Nos.301, 302 and 303a from *HFS* are arranged as No.22 from *Forty-Four Duos* (1931), No.7 from *Twenty Hungarian Folk Songs* (1929) and Nos. 39, 42 from *For Children* (1908-1909), respectively.

²⁷ No.35 from *Forty-Four Duos* consists of an imitation of a Ruthenian *kolomeika* melody rather than a setting of an authentic one.

²⁸ *HFS*, p.22.

The relationship between the quasi-folk tune and the rondo theme is easily recognizable (see Ex.7). The melodic details are the same except for the final 'line' of the rondo theme which does not descend as expected, making the range small by comparison. (By ending on the fifth degree it has an open-ended, forward-moving feel.) The pentatonic-based modality of the quasi-folk tune is just as strongly present in the rondo theme, also. However, Bartók has two main ways of distancing the rondo theme from authentic folk song. First, there are the changes of metre which are extreme by comparison to the occasional metric changes found in Hungarian folk song (at least those in strict time).²⁹ Bartók did discover startling metric changes in Rumanian folk music, in particular, the *colinde* (Rumanian Christmas carols) of which the following is an example:³⁰

Ex.15: Rumanian *colinde* ; Lampert no.136 (see also *RFM* 4, no.18; excluding varied second verse).



Aside from having already arranged several Rumanian *colinde* (including the above) Bartók was working on the second draft of the *colinde* collection³¹ about the time of writing the *PS*. Breuer thinks the changing metres of the rondo theme do derive from Bartók's experience of *colinde* rhythms but admits that these rhythms by themselves cannot convey a Rumanian character.³² If the irregular metres of the *colinde* did influence the rondo theme it is an indirect influence, made more indirect by the fast tempo of the theme (♩ = 170). Such

²⁹ See *Folk Music of Hungary*, p.32, Ex. 22, collected by Bartók and featuring alternating 2/4 and 3/4 bars.

³⁰ This melody is arranged in Bartók's piano series, *Colinde*, v.1 No.2.

³¹ *RFM* 4 consists of the *colinde* collection along with analyses and an introduction. Bartók worked from his unrevised transcriptions of the *colinde* when arranging them in the series of piano pieces, *Colinde* (1915). These transcriptions can be seen Lampert's book, *Bartók népdal-feldolgozásainak forrásjegyzéke* [The source-catalogue of Bartók's Folksong arrangements].

³² Breuer, *op. cit.*, pp.54-7. For further discussion of indirect rhythmic influences from folk music in the works under study, see ch.8.

fast *tempi* are alien to the Rumanian carols, and Hungarian folk songs and constitute Bartók's second distancing device.

The imaginary syllabic pattern of the quasi-folk tune, represented by Z z Z z, is also present in the rondo theme with six 'syllables' in 'lines' 1 and 3 and five in 'lines' 2 and 4. This underlying rhythmic structure is maintained in the other complete versions of the rondo theme as can be seen in Ex. 14, below, followed by a list which gives details of the syllabic pattern in each strophe:

Ex.16: Complete versions of the rondo theme and variants in *PS*, III.

[A] *meno f*

[B] *mf sf mf sf*

[C] *a tempo p sf mf sf*

[D] *Tempo I f*

[E] *[+ octave]*

[F] *f (simile)*

[G] *Tempo I, ♩ = 170 p mp [Incomplete]*

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| (a) bb.20-27: | 8686 | ('inverted version') |
| (b) bb.53-73: | 6565 | ('vocal version' -verse one) |
| (c) bb.74-82: | 7676 | ('vocal version' - verse two) |
| (d) bb.92-99: | 6565 | (rondo theme proper) |
| (e) bb.100-110: | 8787 | (rondo theme varied) |
| (f) bb.111-127: | 7676 | ('re-inverted theme', repeated) |
| (g) bb.175-181: | 767(6) | ('inverted theme') |

Other versions of the rondo theme are either extensions (some of which are incomplete) or 'instrumental' imitations (where a peasant instrumental idiom is evoked). The Z z Z z syllabic pattern is no longer maintained in these other versions as Bartók manipulates the thematic material to suit his compositional needs. In the latter part of the finale (b.157 onwards) we can observe a general progression away from the regular, simpler versions to irregular, more complex ones. This process really begins with the second rondo statement, where the melody is extended on repetition (See Exs.16d and 16e, above.):

Ex.17: Incomplete or fragmented versions of the rondo theme, or 'instrumental' versions, in *PS*, III.

[A] bb.157-171

Più vivo, $\text{♩} = \text{cca. } 184$

Ex.17 [A] is a musical score for a piano piece, measures 157-171. It is marked 'Più vivo, $\text{♩} = \text{cca. } 184$ '. The score is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a note marked '(+ lower octave)'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

[B] bb.227-247

MP, marcato

Ex.17 [B] is a musical score for a piano piece, measures 227-247. It is marked '*MP, marcato*'. The score is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a crescendo (*cresc.*) and includes a note marked 'rall. ... *sf*'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

[C] bb.248-264

f marcato [+ octaves]

Ex.17 [C] is a musical score for a piano piece, measures 248-264. It is marked '*f marcato* [+ octaves]'. The score is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a note marked '(f)'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

[D]

Tempo I, $\text{♩} = 126$

mf [top part of R.H. only]

Ex.17 [D] is a musical score for a piano piece, measures 265-281. It is marked 'Tempo I, $\text{♩} = 126$ '. The score is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a note marked 'allarg.'. The second staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a note marked 'sf'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

[E] bb.205-215

mf

Ex.17 [E] is a musical score for a piano piece, measures 205-215. It is marked '*mf*'. The score is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

- (a) third rondo statement (b) lead-in to fourth rondo statement
 (c) fourth rondo statement (d) 'flute' version (e) 'violin' version.

We have already seen how Bartók's quasi-folk tune (the 'vocal' theme) and rondo theme were influenced by his syllabic system in *HFS*. It is possible that his work on rhythmic classification in folk music may have also helped shape his compositional thinking in this movement. For instance, Appendix 4 in *HFS* contains an "Index of Rhythm Schemata" which was originally included in the introduction. ('Rhythm Schemata' was mentioned in relation to Ex.5, earlier in the chapter.) The rhythmic patterns of the melody sections are ordered "...from the lowest to the highest number of syllables", then according to isorhythmic or heterorhythmic construction, and finally "...from lesser to greater variety in the rhythm schema, or to antiquity (older preceding newer forms)".³³ Likewise, in his introduction to *RFM 4* (*colinde*), Bartók makes a classification of melodies "...according to the rhythm of the individual (first) melody lines, progressing ...from simpler to more complex."³⁴ The actual rhythmic variations that Bartók applies to his rondo theme (in Exs.16 and 17) are unlike those in the aforementioned folk collections, but the same progression of simple to complex is employed. Therefore, the rhythmic variation in this movement has a basis in his ethnomusicological experience.³⁵

Variation, whether in terms of rhythm or melody, is an important aspect of folk music which influenced Bartók greatly. He stated the connection between his compositional techniques and those of folk music in a well-known interview with Denijs Dille, in 1937:³⁶

³³ *HFS*, Benjamin Suchoff's editorial notes to Appendix IV, p.361.

³⁴ *RFM 4*, p.13. This ordering is made to distinguish the heterometric groups of songs.

³⁵ See ch.8, for further discussion. The point this paragraph makes might better belong to the category of indirect influence except that the bond between folk melody and rhythm, here, seems too close to separate.

³⁶ *Bartók Studies*, ed. Todd Crow, quoted in Bence Szabolcsi's "Bartók's Principles of Composition" (Reprint of Articles Published in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976), p.19.

It is clear, however, that folk melodies are not really suited to be used in forms of 'pure' music, for they, especially in their original shapes, do not really yield to the elaboration which is usual in these forms. The melodic world of my string quartets does not really differ from that of folk songs: it is only their setting that is stricter. It has probably been observed that I place much of the emphasis on the work of technical elaboration, that I do not like to repeat a musical thought unchanged, and I never repeat a detail unchanged. This practice of mine arises from my inclination for variation and for transforming themes.

We have already seen an example of folk music variation in the two authentic folk songs presented in Exs. 8 and 9. Kodály, too, emphasizes the importance of variation in his book by bringing together several variants of the one folk song, such as a group of five collected from different counties. He concludes:³⁷

With some slight exaggeration, it may be said that twenty or thirty tunes can be placed side by side so that there will hardly be any difference between any two adjacent tunes, and scarcely any similarity between the first and last.

However, as we have seen, the type of variation used in folk music is not necessarily the type of variation Bartók uses in his original compositions. The extensions and manipulations of the rondo theme in the sonata largely reflect a technique forged from the Western European tradition, while the principle of constant variation of material is largely learned from Eastern European folk music.

Having said as much, we can find examples of variation in this movement which are close to the types of alterations in folk music. In Exs. 16c, 16e and 17c each appearance of the first and third lines is varied, with one of the repeated notes that opened the rondo theme being raised a major second, then a m.3, a M.3 and finally a p.5:



Ex. 18: Variations to the opening of the main melody from *PS*, III.

³⁷ Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, p. 71.

Similar types of variation occur in the final 'lines' of Exs.16e and 17c, and also in 'lines' 2 and 4 of the 'inverted versions' (Exs.16b, f, g):

Ex.19: Varied versions of the fourth 'line' of the main melody in *PS*, III.

Rondo Theme, 1st statement Rondo theme, 2nd statement
[+ octave] [+ octaves]

Rondo theme, 4th statement
[+ octave] 8va. lower

'Inverted version', 1st statement 'Re-inverted theme' 'Inverted theme' final statement
sf sff sff

These alterations to the melody line are similar to the types of changes Bartók made to the authentic folk song in Ex.10b. As Olsvai points out, these slight changes are perfectly legitimate because they are just the sorts of variation a folk singer is likely to make.³⁸ This bears out Kodály's point about the gradualness and consistency of folk variation in the quotation above. The influence of this type of variation in the sonata can be labelled 'direct'.

We have seen how the quasi-folk tune in Ex.7 imitates the characteristics of a rural, vocal performance. There are two further episodes in the movement based on folk music genres; the first consists of a peasant flute (*furulya*) version of the tune (Ex.17d), and the second a rural violin (or fiddle) version (Ex.17e).

The Hungarian peasant flute performers often created heavily ornamented versions of folk songs. This can be seen in Bartók's transcription of a slow flute piece, based on the folk song that proceeds it.³⁹

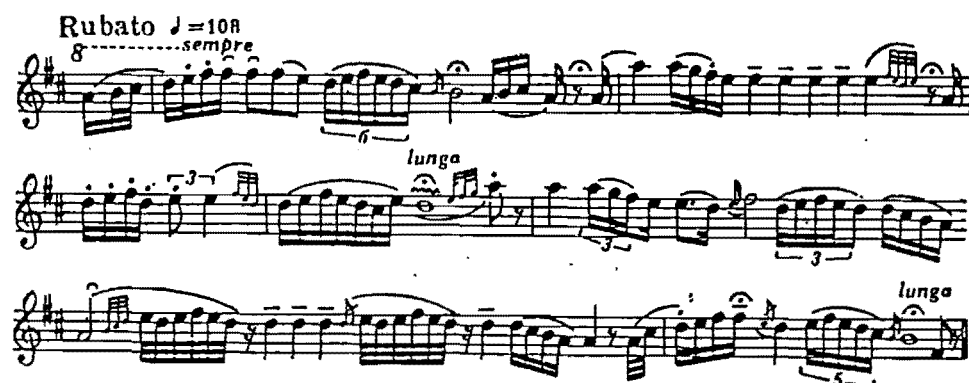
³⁸ See I. Olsvai, *op. cit.*, p.335.

³⁹ Both items are from Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, the flute example on p.136 (ex.187) and the folk song on p.56 (ex.69).

Ex.20: (a) Hungarian folk tune; Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*.



(b) Peasant flute version of the above melody; Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*.



Kodály comments, "It is not easy to distinguish the simple sung tune from the runs of the furulya".⁴⁰ Likewise, Bartók's 'flute' version in the sonata hides the melody in intricate figurations, albeit not to the same extent as in Ex.20. Due to the fast tempo, the figurations have to be crushed in, creating a somewhat hysterical effect. This is characteristic of much dance music played on the flute which Bartók collected in Hungary and Rumania, as in the following example from Maramures;⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.137.

⁴¹ *RFM* 5, no.177c.

Ex.21: "Batuta in palmi", peasant flute; *RFM* 5, no.177c.



The flute version is distinguished from the violin version by the types of figurations used. Gracenotes and florid scalar runs, so characteristic of flute music, are not so typical of violin performance. The slurred couplets of notes in Ex.17e, on the other hand, are suggestive of common bowing technique; we can see this type of 'rural' bowing in nos.136 and 187b of *RFM* 5, for example. Also typical of instrumental (and particularly violin) performance is the use of 'shifted rhythm' in the violin version. 'Shifted rhythm' is a phenomenon Bartók explains, as follows:⁴²

It ['shifted rhythm'] can be expressed for one melody section by the following symbols:

$\overset{\cdot}{a} \overset{\cdot}{b} \overset{\cdot}{c} | \overset{\cdot}{a} \overset{\cdot}{b} \overset{\cdot}{c} | \overset{\cdot}{d} e ||$; and $a \overset{\cdot}{b} \overset{\cdot}{c} d | \overset{\cdot}{b} \overset{\cdot}{c} d | \overset{\cdot}{d} e ||$

Each letter stands for a quarter note value; identical letters mean identical content. The phrase $a b c$ or $b c d$ is repeated with shifted accents so that accentuated parts lose their accent in the repeat while non-accentuated parts gain one...

Bartók proceeds to give several examples of this from his collection. The following example from a bagpipe piece shows the 'shifted rhythm' technique in musical terms:

Ex.22: Example of 'shifted rhythm' in a Rumanian bagpipe piece.



⁴² *RFM* 1, pp.45-6.

The 'shifted rhythm' is indicated in Bartók's 'violin' version (see Ex.17e). As we can see, his use of the technique is more sophisticated than would occur in authentic folk music. Technical exaggeration of this type is characteristic in Bartók's music, thus avoiding the simple imitation of a feature of folk music. 'Shifted rhythm' also appears in the lead-up to the final rondo statement; the effect is very much exaggerated here too, as a means of gathering momentum towards the climax of the movement (see Ex.17b).

Variation of the tune through the use of 'shifted rhythm' gives the violin version an improvisatory character which, according to Somfai, brings it closer to authentic rural performance.⁴³ In the original version of this episode in the second draft, the melodic line followed the strophic form of the tune (in the same way as the 'flute' version). However, in the same draft Bartók settled on the revised form, with 'shifted rhythm':⁴⁴

Ex.23: Revised form of the 'violin' version in second draft of *PS*, III.



If we compare the revised version above with the final published version of the melody, we notice that the octave displacements in the former are applied more regularly. In the latter, only two notes are displaced. This feature further heightens the suggestion of improvisation. Possibly, the imaginary fiddlers are imitating the 'squeaky' notes of the bagpipes. As we shall see later, violinists (and other folk instrumentalists) often imitated the bagpipe idiom.

⁴³ Somfai *Tizenynyolc Bartók-Tanymány*, pp.99-100. In his 'commentary' to the facsimile of the second draft of the Sonata, Somfai says the violin version "...reflects the style of village fiddlers in Transylvania".

⁴⁴ The strophic form appears on p.14 of the facsimile of the second draft, and the revised form on p.16 (where it is separated from the movement).

The second draft of this movement of the *PS* originally contained another episode in which the peasant bagpipes were imitated.⁴⁵ Therefore, the original conception was to have a 'catalogue' of versions of the rondo theme, made up of vocal, flute, bagpipe and violin imitations, interspersed by statements of the rondo theme. The bagpipe version, along with six(!) extra versions of the rondo theme was inserted between bb.156 and 175 of the final, published form of the movement. This large chunk was eventually substituted by the nineteen bars between b.156 and b.175 (the third rondo statement). In the same draft, an independent version of this episode appears in a sort of shorthand (on p.12 of the facsimile). This eventually formed a separate movement, entitled "Musettes", in *Out of Doors*, another piano work written about the same time as the sonata. Although the bagpipe episode in *PS* makes a sharp contrast to the rest of the movement, thematic links exist between the two. In a sketch for this movement, the bagpipe episode appears alongside a sketch of the rondo theme, 'inverted version' and a link passage.⁴⁶ Somfai suggests that Bartók may have written the bagpipe idea without intending it to be related to the rondo theme and later realised the rhythmic and intervallic connection:

⁴⁵ See Somfai *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanulmány*, and the 'commentary' to the facsimile of the second draft of *PS* for a more detailed account of this episode. See Appendix 3 for a description of the second version of this movement presented in the second draft, along with a description of the version from the first draft.

⁴⁶ See Somfai *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanulmány*, "iii. tábla", p.92. The sketch is reproduced in Ex.24, including Bartók's short-hand notation.

Ex.24: Relationship between Bartók's sketch of the 'bagpipe' theme from second draft and 'vocal' version in *PS*, III.

Handwritten musical notation for Ex.24. The top system shows three staves. The first two staves are labeled 'a)' and contain complex, rapid passages. The third staff is labeled 'Vocal' theme: transposed to G' and contains a simpler melody. The middle system shows two staves. The first staff is labeled 'b)' and contains a complex passage. The second staff is labeled 'Second line from rondo theme sketch (transposed)' and contains a melody. The bottom system shows a single staff with a simple melody.

Bartók frequently imitated the Eastern European bagpipes in his works. (We shall see several examples in ch.2.) Although virtually obsolete in many areas when Bartók was collecting, they impressed him more than any other folk instrument. As Sárosi states, "Of the various layers of instrumental music performed by peasants, it is most of all bagpipe music...which has left its mark on the work of both Bartók and Kodály".⁴⁷ We can find several examples of bagpipe-like passages in Bartók's works, not only in original ones, such as *Dance Suite* (1923) or *Violin Sonata No.2* (1922), but also in his arrangements of authentic bagpipe pieces, such as the finale to *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (1914-1917). His attraction towards the bagpipes is also evident in his ethnomusicological writings; Somfai writes:⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Sárosi, *op. cit.*, p.24.

⁴⁸ Somfai, "Analytical Notes on Bartók's Piano Year of 1926", V, "Folk-Music Genre Form (Bagpipe Apotheosis in Musettes)", *Studia Musicologica* v.26, 1984, p.26.

Reading his [Bartók's] essays on folk music in their chronological order, one gathers that for a long time he considered bagpiping the only other truly [sic] original product of folk music of the Hungarian, Slovak, and Rumanian regions apart from the central treasury of vocal melodies; all else, despite their richly idiomatic and embellished styles, were only substitutes - either for singing or for playing the bagpipes.

There are several typical features of Eastern European bagpipe music imitated in the aborted episode. The open fifth drone and numerous trills are obvious ones. Continuous leaps in the melody line as seen in the following passage are also idiomatic for the bagpipes:

Ex.25: Extract from 'bagpipe' episode from second draft of *PS*, III (facsimile, p.13, fifth system).



In his introduction to *RFM I*, Bartók describes the way in which a *staccato* melody can be obtained on the bagpipes by the rapid alternation of melody and fundamental notes, the latter being so soft as to appear not as part of the melody line.⁴⁹ To use Bartók's example, the following figure,

Ex.26: (a)



will actually sound like this:

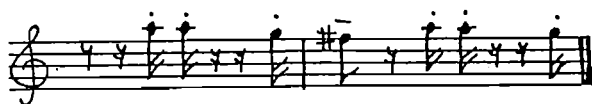
⁴⁹ *RFM I*, pp.22-3. Also see *BBE*, "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", pp.245-6.

Ex.26: (b)




Therefore, the extract in Ex.25 is designed to sound thus:

Ex.27:



(A similar effect occurs in the finale of *VSI*, [36]b.7- 37, where the bagpipes are imitated.)

Although a strophic form is followed to begin with, the repetition and variation of the motivic-like melodic material at the beginning of the episode is also characteristic of bagpipe music. While there is no direct parallel between this and bagpipe *aprája*, the same improvisatory use of ideas is present. Likewise, the motive  is handled in a free manner.

The dissonant, tense atmosphere of this episode also links it especially with bagpipe music. The semitonal clashes (such as F#/F^b at the beginning) are designed to imitate the rough approximate scales and pitches of authentic peasant bagpipe music. Moreover, the Eastern European bagpipes sound rather wild and demonic⁵⁰, and tended to symbolize things diabolical and supernatural (as well as providing an image for merry-making)⁵¹. The famous 1806 drawing of a bagpipe player performing recruiting music shows the presence of carved devil and goat's head on the instrument, the latter being symbolic of evil.⁵² Kodály mentions a ballad by János Arányi entitled "Ünneprontók" [sabbath breakers] which is based on a folk legend about a demon bagpiper.⁵³ In another

⁵⁰ See ch.4 for further description of the 'sound-world' of peasant music.

⁵¹ See Sárosi, *op.cit.*, p.24.

⁵² See Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, illustration opposite p.80.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.133.

Hungarian folk song which Bartók's assistant Jenő Deutsch transcribed, the first verse has the following words:⁵⁴

He who wants to be a piper, Shall descend to hell;
There are pretty big dogs there, the'll [sic] make pretty big bagpipes.

The demonic associations of bagpipe music are translated by Bartók into the episode from the sonata (second draft) through the persistent use of semitonal clashes and thick, harsh textures. Somfai describes it as ..."perhaps Bartók's most diabolic, self-composed bagpipe music".⁵⁵

There would seem to be two main reasons why Bartók eventually omitted the bagpipe episode from this movement, thus spoiling the folk-inspired programme. First, the momentum of the movement would have been slackened too much by the episode, not only because of the tempo but also its sheer size. Bartók had experienced problems in other finales of his, which tended to be too long. (See, for instance, the finale of *VS1*, discussed in ch.2.) Second, he struggled to find a convincing way of connecting the bagpipe episode with the surrounding material, of making a smooth transition in tempo and character. This is documented in sketches for this movement; Somfai's essay, "A Zongoraszónáta finaléjának metamorfózisa" [Metamorphosis in the finale of the Piano Sonata] shows five different attempts Bartók made at leading into the bagpipe episode.⁵⁶ Bartók even tried reducing the size of the episode by about twenty bars in order to keep it in the movement, but to no avail.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *Magyar Népzenei Hanglemezek Bartók Béla Lejegyzéseivel* [Hungarian Folk Music Gramophone Records with Béla Bartók's Transcriptions], transcriptions, F.8a(b). See the English translation on p.58.

⁵⁵ Somfai 'commentary' to the facsimile of the second draft of the *PS*.

⁵⁶ See Somfai, *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanulmány*, op. cit., 'vii. tábla', pp.102-3.

⁵⁷ See facsimile of second draft of *PS*, pp.12-13, where a section is crossed out in red pencil.

These comments about the imitation of bagpipe music also apply, of course, to the final form the episode took - as the separate movement, "Musettes" in *Out of Doors*.⁵⁸ However, the major addition to the "Musettes" movement from the original version is the final section (the last twenty five bars), sketched in the second draft.⁵⁹ This section is even more directly evocative of Eastern European bagpipe music. Most notably, Bartók employs the 'acoustic' scale (the first mode of the *heptatonia secunda*) which he found in bagpipe music from Maramureş, in Rumania. The *staccato* technique described earlier is also used in a more obvious fashion, and some of the melodic shapes come close to those in authentic folk items:⁶⁰

Ex.28: *Out of Doors*, "Musettes", bb.95-111



⁵⁸ For further discussion of the features of bagpipe music imitated in "Musettes", see Somfai "Analytical Notes", *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Facsimile of second draft of *PS*, p.12, bottom three lines of the page.

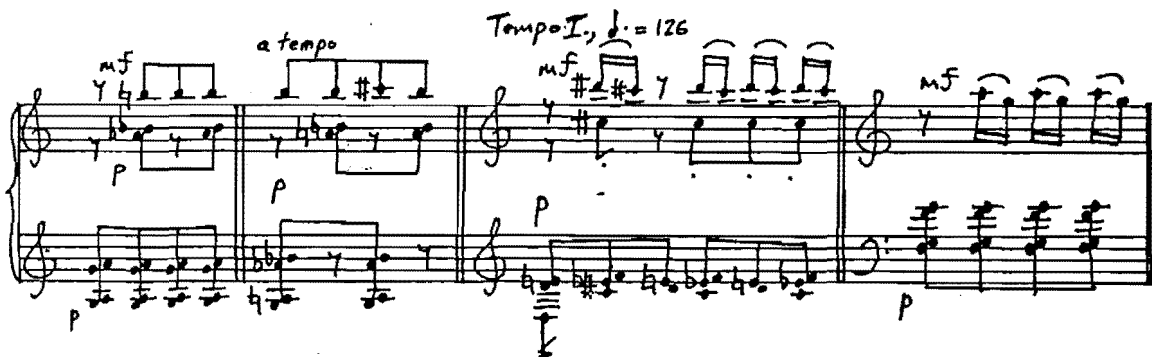
⁶⁰ See ch.2, Exs.32 and 45 for examples of similar melodic ideas in Rumanian instrumental folk music.



In addition, one chord is maintained throughout, constructed in perfect fifths with 'mistuned' pitches G[#] and B^b added, imitating the drone in a more direct manner than before.


In the three episodes of *PS*, III, accompaniment figurations are economical and simple, consisting of reiterated tone clusters which are only slightly varied in texture. This is a device to help focus the listener's attention on the folk music imitations which occur above the accompaniment:

Ex.29: Accompaniment figures in *PS*, III.

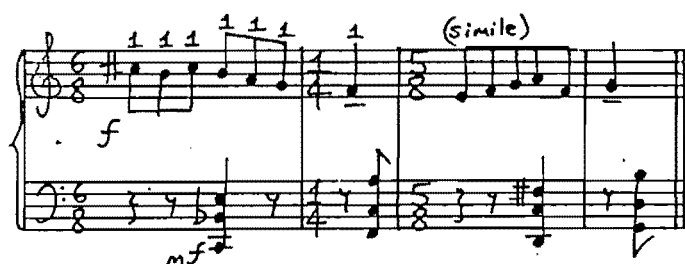


This sort of accompaniment functions in a similar way to the drone in authentic instrumental folk music. As we shall see in Part Two of this thesis, the monophonic nature of the folk music Bartók collected had a strong influence on his harmonic language.

The only other melodies not discussed so far are the 'inverted versions' of the rondo theme, seen in Exs.16a, f and g. Exs.16a and g are not true inversions of the rondo theme; 'lines' 1 and 3 are close to being true inversions while 'lines' 2 and 4 are simply

variations. (This is examined further in ch.5.) Bartók also varies the metre (and the imaginary syllabic pattern) but despite this, the melody is still recognizably related to the rondo theme. This is partly because of its close proximity to the rondo theme (it follows immediately after it) but mainly because various Hungarian folk-like features are maintained; the modal pitch content with a pentatonic basis, well defined four-part structure and the emphatic rhythmic cadence, . In Ex.16f, 'lines' 1 and 3 are re-inverted, thus restoring the original descending shape of the rondo theme. However, the modality of these 'lines' is altered, the overall scale of the melody being D-E-F-G-A-B-C#. This scale can be thought of as either a form of the *heptatonia secunda* (See 'Review', pp.51-2) or an ascending form of D melodic minor, with pentatonic turns maintained in the second and fourth 'lines'. The harmonisation of the first 'verse' (bb.111-18) features diatonic triadic progressions which, along with the melodic minor scale, conveys a sense of irony. It certainly distances the folk elements further than before. Added to this is the peculiar fingering (or 'thumbing') of the melody, creating a deliberate awkwardness:

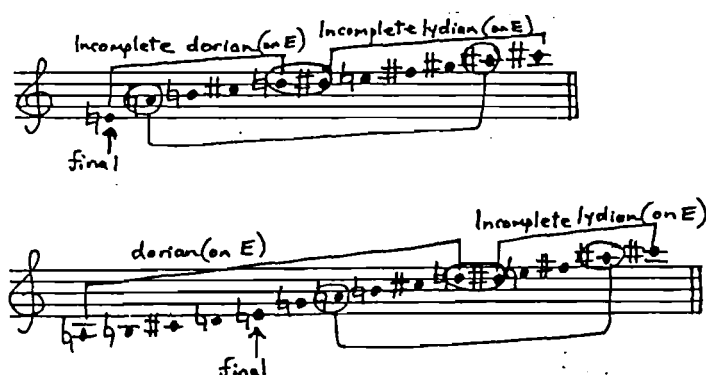
Ex.30: *PS*, III, Opening of 're-inverted' version, bb.111-14.



Perhaps Bartók is satirizing the types of old-fashioned folk song arrangements where modal or pentatonic melodies were forced to fit traditional Western harmonisations.⁶¹ It is not unusual for Bartók to insert ironic episodes into the finales of works; *String Quartet No.5* and *Divertimento* contain much more blatantly satirical passages than the one above. When repeating the melody in bb.119-26, Bartók reverts to a more characteristic setting (with a bimodal mixture of D and A melodic minor scales).

The two extended statements of the rondo theme in Exs.16e and 17c cover pitches from different modes, as can be seen in the following pitch analysis:

Ex.31: Pitch content of the melodic lines in Ex.16e and 17c (second and fourth rondo statements)



Originally, the rondo melody employed what appears to be an incomplete mixolydian scale on B, with the harmony establishing E as the tonal centre (see Ex.7).⁶² In the extended versions above, we can divide the pitch content into a lydian segment on E and a dorian segment on E. As we shall see in Chapter 5, these are examples of Bartók's bimodal technique. However, the alternative or dual degrees which result ($D\sharp/D$, $A\sharp/A$, $G\sharp/G$) are not without precedent in folk music. In West-Hungarian (or Transdanubian) folk music, for instance, he found that the modes the peasants used frequently had unstable third and

⁶¹ See, for instance, Bartók's scathing remarks about a folk music collection compiled and arranged by Dr. Heinrich Möller in the essay, "Gypsy Music or Hungarian Music?" (1931), *BBE*, pp.218-20. In the second Harvard lecture, Bartók again bemoans the use of "...the most dull and hackneyed chord successions for folk music." *BBE*, "Harvard Lectures", p.374.

⁶² See ch.5 for an explanation of the use of the dorian mode in the opening rondo statement.

seventh degrees. In the dorian mode, for instance, F^{\sharp} might sometimes become F^{\natural} , or somewhere in between (and likewise for C^{\sharp}). A West-Hungarian folk song is shown in Ex.10a and the unstable third and seventh degrees are indicated by the arrows on F^{\sharp} and B^{\flat} . As we can see from Bartók's varied version of this melody (in Ex.10b), he alludes to the unstable third by including both B^{\flat} and B^{\sharp} in the scale. In her essay, Olsvai gives further proof of Bartók's awareness of this West-Hungarian feature.⁶³ The scales in Ex.31 contain dual third and seventh degrees, as well as a dual fourth degree, corresponding partially to the Hungarian model. It would seem, therefore, the dual degrees in the varied versions of the rondo theme reflect an aspect of Hungarian folk music.⁶⁴

Ex.17c, the final statement of the rondo theme, is the most extended version in terms of length as well as range of scale. Bb.262-4 at the end of this statement are noteworthy because of the bald pentatonicism of the melody line and harmonies, and the marking *allargando*:

Ex.32: *PS*, III, bb.262-4.



This would seem to be a significant moment in the piece, the peak of this climactic final section. The direct reference to Hungarian folk music through the use of semitoneless

⁶³ I. Olsvai, *op. cit.*, pp.333ff.

⁶⁴ Dual degrees in Transdanubian folk music were discussed on p.70 of the present chapter, in connection with the formation of mixolydian and major modes from the pentatonic scale. Dual degrees are a feature of other folk musics Bartók collected, such as many Rumanian bagpipe items.

pentatonicism is at the heart of this significant moment and is Bartók's way of affiliating himself with this beloved source. Such moments are called 'culmination points' by Somfai and occur in several of Bartók's works - *Divertimento I*, b.62-5 or *Piano Concerto No.2 III*, b.320-2, for instance.⁶⁵ As is the case in Ex.32, these 'culmination points' are always Hungarian in character. In other words, they refer to some typical aspect of Hungarian folk music, supporting Bartók's own claim that he is first and foremost an Hungarian composer.⁶⁶

PIANO SONATA: MOVEMENT I

In the first movement of the *PS* there are two melodies which imitate folk song. Following the fragmentary melodic line of theme 1, a second theme is introduced consisting of a strophic melody, doubled in thirds and accompanied by a bitonal pedal note:

Ex.33: *PS*, I, theme 2, bb.44-56.

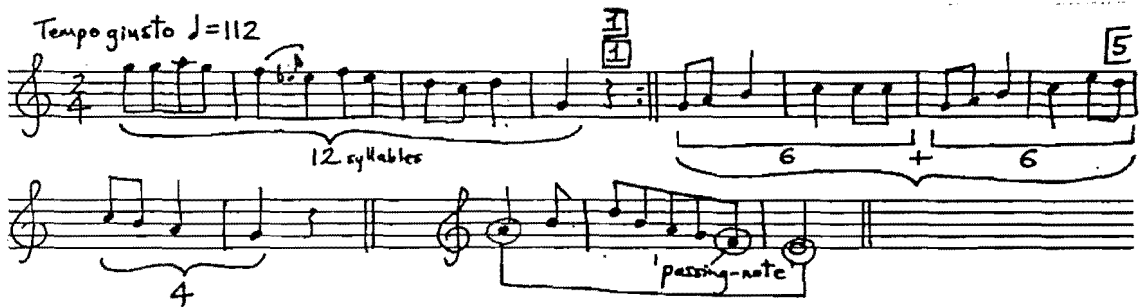
The musical score for Ex.33 consists of four lines of music. Line 1 is a single system with a melody in the right hand and a bitonal pedal note in the left hand, marked *mp*. Line 2 is a single system with a melody in the right hand and a bitonal pedal note in the left hand, marked *cresc.*. Line 3 is a single system with a melody in the right hand and a bitonal pedal note in the left hand, marked *f*. Line 4 is a single system with a melody in the right hand and a bitonal pedal note in the left hand, marked *f*.

⁶⁵ Somfai "A Characteristic Culmination Point in Bartók's Instrumental Forms" *International Musicological Conference In Commemoration of Béla Bartók 1971*, ed. József Ujfalussy and János Breuer (Budapest: Zeneműkiado, 1972).

⁶⁶ See letter to Octavian Beu, *Béla Bartók Letters* p.201.

The tonality of the melody is E (the pitch on which it eventually ends), the tonic key. This theme is part of the first subject group in terms of classical sonata form. While the form of the melody is clearly defined by the accompanying motive between 'lines', the structure of the latter half seems to consist of three sequential limbs rather than two 'lines' of a folk tune. In this way, the final two 'lines' are run together with 'line' 4 beginning in b.54 (see above). The running together of melody lines in this manner does occur in some Hungarian folk songs as we can see in the following, from *HFS*:

Ex.34: Hungarian folk tune; *HFS*, no.241.



Line 3 of this song is made up of two sequential limbs, labelled a "double line" by Bartók,⁶⁷ and line 4 forms the third of these limbs (being inverted), as was the case in Ex.33. This song comes from the 'Miscellaneous' Class, sub-Class III which is divided into sixteen groups, using Bartók's syllabic system to categorize them. Type 4 has the syllabic pattern, Z Z z+z z, where the fourth line is often shorter than the other 'z' parts;⁶⁸ the song in Ex.34 follows this pattern as does Bartók's melody, approximately:

Syllabic pattern:	Z Z z+z z
Folk song in Ex.34:	12 12 6+6 4
Bartók's melody:	10 12 7+7 7

⁶⁷ *HFS*, p.64.

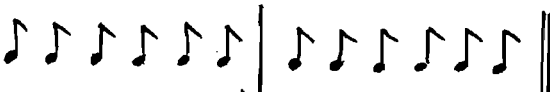
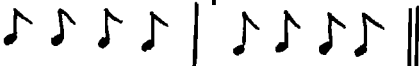

⁶⁸ *HFS*, pp.65, 67.

Although there may be no folk tune that imitates exactly the syllabic count of Bartók's melody, the composer uses the folk song principle of 'run-on', sequential 'lines' to vary the internal make-up of the strophic structure. Somfai notes this feature in the theme from the second movement of the *Violin Concerto No.2*, stating that "The cohesion of lines 3 and 4 ...form almost typical Hungarian folk music features".⁶⁹ An even clearer example of this occurs in the Mikrokosmos piece "In the Style of a Folksong" (no.112) in which the melody has the form $A A^v^3 A^5 + A^5 A^v$, and the syllabic pattern, 12, 12, 6+6, 6. Bartók also arranged no.238 from *HFS* (from type 4 of sub-Class III) in his work *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (no.5).

The form of the melody in Ex.33 is ABCD, a typical old style Hungarian structure, There are, however, thematic links between the melody 'lines'. 'Line' 2 could be seen as a variation of 'line'1, making the form AA^vBC , and 'line'4 follows on sequentially from 'line'3, despite being altered. If we accept AA^vBC as the form, a parallel can be made with that of the folk song in Ex.34; this is the form characteristic of type 4 from sub-Class III of the 'Miscellaneous' class, as we can see in Nos. 238-241 of *HFS* (See Appendix III, p.353).



A rhythmic feature of Bartók's theme that links it with folk song is the use of simple quaver and crotchet values. Bartók traced the rhythms of 'Old' style folk song to the following three basic patterns:

Ex.35: Basic rhythmic patterns in 'Old' style Hungarian folk songs.

12-syllable songs:	
8-syllable songs:	
6-syllable songs:	

⁶⁹ Somfai "Strategies of Variation in the second movement of Bartók's Violin Concerto 1937-1938", *Studia Musicologica*, v.19, 1977, p.166.

Despite variation from these basic patterns in Hungarian folk song, there remained many items in Bartók's collection consisting largely of quavers and crotchets- nos.7a, 9, 11a, 13, 39, 42 and others from *HFS* are examples of this.

Another rhythmic characteristic from Hungarian folk music is the emphatic cadential formula,  (augmented to  in 'line'4). Examples of this feature can be seen in nos.6, 7a, 11a, and 13 from *HFS*, and also in several other works of Bartók's; *Concerto for Orchestra* V, bb.137, 408 and 412, *Dance Suite* III, main melody, to name but two examples. However, a third rhythmic feature which is not common in Hungarian folk songs (in strict time, at least) is the changing metres. While it is possible Bartók's experience of *colinde* rhythm may have affected this melody, it seems more likely any rhythmic influence is at an indirect level. As was the case with the rondo theme in the finale, the changing metres act as a distancing device, making the melody sound more abstract.

The basic scale of Bartók's melody is E phrygian, a characteristic mode from 'Old' style Hungarian folk song. The prominence of the fourth degree, A, emphasizes the pentatonic undercurrent to the tune, as we can see in the final 'line', in Ex.33. There are two melody notes foreign to E phrygian, G^b and A^b. These are deliberate 'wrong notes' and are discussed in ch.4, under the heading 'Mistake Imitations'.

Two further characteristics of Hungarian folk song are present in Ex.33: first, the descending nature of the melody line, and second, the large range (an octave and a fourth). It is a little difficult to determine the range, as the melody is displaced up an octave at the end of 'line'2 (b.50 onwards). While helping to avoid the texture of the theme becoming too low and 'muddy', this type of transposition also has a precedent in Hungarian folk song. Due to the large ranges of some of their songs, the peasants would occasionally jump to another octave if the melody was getting too high or low; this would frequently happen if the singer started at an unsuitable pitch. Bartók describes this "malpractice" in his Introduction to *HFS* (see pp.50-1).

Therefore, theme 2 has several general characteristics typical of 'Old' style Hungarian melodies, but also contains syllabic and formal properties that correspond with a specific melodic type from the 'Miscellaneous' Class. This latter aspect of the melody also

suggests the possibility of Slovakian influence, as will be shown in our discussion of theme 4.

There are also non-folk features of the melody which distance it from authentic folk music. We have already mentioned the irregular, changing metres, although these could be seen as an indirect, Rumanian feature. The bimodal accompaniment and doubling of the melody in thirds (plus various 'wrong notes') are art music techniques that essentially camouflage the folkiness of the theme (see Ex.33). While the strong relationship between the subdominant pitch, A, and the tonic, E, emphasizes a feature of Hungarian modality, Bartók's theme exaggerates the importance of A so as to avoid too much hovering around E (this key being firmly established in the bars preceding theme 2). Finally, the melodic line is more scalar in its progression than is usual in folk song. This feature, coupled with the doubling in thirds, perhaps shows the influence of Bartók's early keyboard music studies.⁷⁰

When theme 2 recurs in the latter part of the development section (and is consequently omitted from the recapitulation proper), its melodic line is considerably varied by extensions and fragmentations. Again, this sort of variation is part of Bartók's compositional technique rather than an imitation of folk music procedures, but some of the phrases that result do have modal turns similar to types found in Hungarian folk song:

Ex.36: *PS*, I, fragmentation of theme 2, bb.165-9.



Melodic motives which outline a P.4 (such as the one above) are to be found in most of the other themes in this movement (Ex.37a). Part of the reason behind the fragmentation of theme 2 is to stress this intervallic association. Similar motives or phrases occur in Hungarian folk song as we can see in Ex.37b:

⁷⁰ See 'Historical Background', p.15. An example of these features in Bartók's keyboard editions occurs in "Corrente Ottava" by Rossi, from *Tre Correnti*, in *Italian Keyboard Music*, iv, arranged by Bartók in 1926-28, published in 1930. The author found this piece in *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music* v.15, ed. John R. White (American Institute of Musicology, Hänssler Verlag, 1966), p.46.

Ex.37: (a) Related melodic motives in *PS*, I.

Handwritten musical notation for Ex.37(a). The notation is spread across two staves. The top staff contains three measures: b.169 (simplified, up an octave), bb.85-86, and bb.124-126 (inner-part). The bottom staff contains three measures: ff b.31-33, ff b.66, and b.247 ff [octaves] sf. A 'Tempo I' marking is written above the bottom staff.

(b) Melodic turns in Hungarian folk music.

Handwritten musical notation for Ex.37(b). The notation is spread across three staves. The first two staves are labeled 'No. 11a, HFS' and the third is labeled 'Nos 241, 242, HFS'.

Theme 3 also belongs to the first subject group, following on immediately after the conclusion of theme 2. Its bimodal character grows from the bimodality of the previous theme, the left hand being based on E phrygian (apart from the occasional low B^b) and the right on the 'black' notes. A folk song structure or genre is not imitated but the theme is folk-like due to the bald modality and pentatonicism of the parts. (Further discussion is presented in ch.5.)

The second subject group begins with the shift away from the tonic, E, and the appearance of theme 4, at b.76. This theme has the form and characteristics of a folk song (despite the 'instrumental' gracenotes) but it is more complicated to determine its origin or nationality than those of previous themes. The theme consists of two 'verses' (the second varied); these are presented along with theme 5 which is directly related to theme 4:

Ex.38: PS, I, theme 4, 'verses' 1 and 2, and theme 5 (melodic lines only, simplified).

[A] *bb. 76-86*
MP

[B] *bb. 92-110*
MP

[C] *bb. 116-125*
(inner-part)

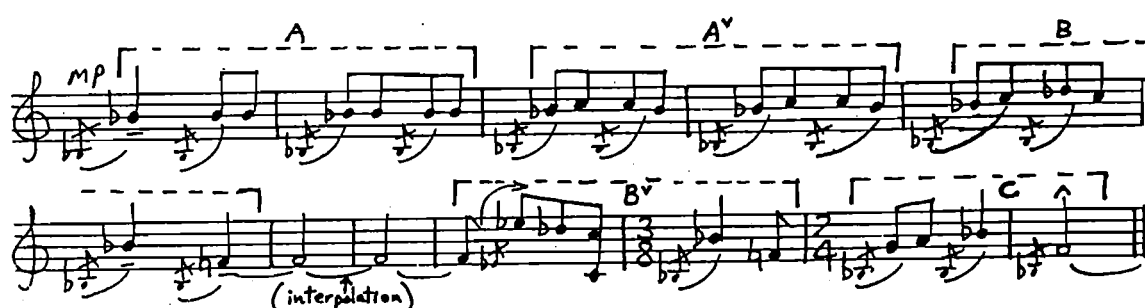
Bearing in mind the characteristics of Hungarian folk song we have seen so far, theme 4 does not seem to be closely connected with this resource. For instance, the scale could be described as a mixture of D# mixolydian and aeolian modes, and is also a form of the *heptatonia secunda*, mentioned in connection with one of the inverted versions of the rondo theme in the third movement:

Ex.39: Scale of theme 4.

This type of scale is not typical in Hungarian folk song. Some pentatonic turns are present, however, with the P.4 being prominent (see Ex.38a). Like theme 2, the melody tends to hover around the subdominant, G#, before eventually ending on D#. The range is not large with the Hungarian descending contour replaced by a more circular motion. However, this last feature combined with the simple step-wise motion at the start of the theme is common in children's folk song (in Hungary and other countries) as can be seen in the examples quoted in the chapter "Children's Songs and Regös Songs" in Kodály's *Folk Music of Hungary*. Bartók's own collection included many children's songs or songs associated with games. For example, no.182 in *HFS* has features in common with theme 4 (the range of a m.7 and predominantly step-wise motion).⁷¹

The ambiguous beginning of theme 4 makes the form of the melody difficult to determine at its first appearance. Even though the opening 'line' is clarified in the second 'verse', the overall structure remains unclear (see Ex.38b). It is not until the recapitulation of this theme that the true form, AA_vBC, is revealed and the melody appears in a simpler version despite the interpolation in bb.217-18:

Ex.40: *PS*, I, recapitulation of theme 4, bb.211-22.



⁷¹ Over ninety of Bartók's transcriptions of children's games (*gyermekjátékok*) appear in v.1 of the *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae*, ed. György Kerényi, 1951.

Curiously, the imaginary syllabic pattern of this melody is similar to that of theme 2, and thus once again analagous to the melodies in type 4 from sub-Class III of the 'Miscellaneous' Class (group C in *HFS*) whose general syllabic pattern is Z Z z+z z. In Bartók's collection, the most common specific pattern is 8 8 6+6 4 (or 6),⁷² close to the pattern in theme 4 (7 8 6+6 4). We are assuming here that the third 'line' (B) is a 'double line', made up of a melodic sequence, a feature we saw in theme 2. This 'double line' is indicated in Ex.32a and b.

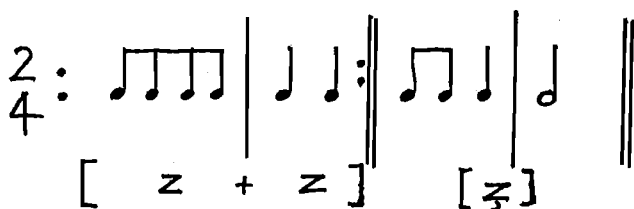
Bartók states that the eight-syllable, 'Z' line in songs from type 4 consisted of the following rhythmic patterns:

Ex.41:



The third of these patterns is used in theme 4, for 'lines' 1 and 2. The most characteristic arrangement of the third and fourth lines ('z+z, z' lines) is:

Ex.42:



As we can see, this fits the rhythmic pattern of Bartók's theme precisely. In the following folk song from type 4, the similarities in syllabic pattern, rhythm and form are shown. Added to this, the scale is the same as in theme 4:

⁷² *HFS*, p.67.

Ex.43: Hungarian folk tune; *HFS*, no.240.



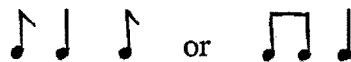
There would seem to be sufficient parallels to suggest a direct link between this specific folk song type and theme 4. Of the songs in sub-Class C III Bartók says:⁷³

The specific characters of the tunes in sub-Class C III are, on the one hand, quite at variance with what we see in classes A and B [old and new style], which are the most genuinely Hungarian; on the other hand, in the Slovakian, Moravian, and Czech funds, they strike no jarring note (although in all likelihood they are, then, imports from the West, not native growths). Hence we may assume that it is from these three regions that this form of construction came.

He carries on to say that only a few songs from this sub-Class display strong Hungarian features. In other words, the folk music influence on Bartók's theme comes mainly from Slovakian sources ('Slovakian' encompassing Slovak, Moravian and Czech). Are there, then, other features in theme 4 that show the influence of Slovak folk music?

Before answering this we need to know some of the general characteristics of Slovakian folk music. In his brief essay entitled "Slovak Folk Music", Bartók divides the folk music into three groups of which the second concerns us. Bartók writes:⁷⁴

They [the songs] show extraordinary variety in both form and scale; specially characteristic of Slovak folk music is the use of the Lydian mode. The rhythm is nearly always *tempo giusto*, 2/4, and the notes are nearly always quarters and eighths; frequent rhythmic forms are:



The phrases often group themselves into three. This group contains fewer ancient melodies. It has many common types and melodies to the Moravian and even the Czech folk songs. It stands also in close relation to the miscellaneous class of Hungarian folk songs.

⁷³ *HFS*, p.65.

⁷⁴ *BBE*, "Slovak Folk Music" (1924), p.128.

Theme 4 is in strict time with the metre, 2/4; the melody is formed out of eighths (quavers) and quarters (crotchets) and uses the rhythmic formula ♪ ♩ ; it is also related to folk songs from the 'Miscellaneous' Class, as we have seen. An analogy can be made between the characteristic three-part structure of Slovak folk songs of this type and the form of theme 4, which has elements of three-part form (see the dotted lines in Ex.38a). Although the scale of the melody is not lydian, the bimodal accompaniment outlines a lydian pentachord on C. Therefore, from Bartók's description, theme 4 does indeed appear to be influenced by Slovak folk music.

Several of the characteristics described above also appear in theme 2, discussed earlier: the syllabic pattern, *tempo giusto* (with 2/4 being the main underlying metre), and restriction of rhythm to simple crotchet and quaver values. In retrospect then, theme 2 would appear to be partly based on what Bartók found to be Slovakian folk characteristics, although the influence is less obvious than in theme 4. Moreover, there are melodic links between the two themes (and the other themes also) which help to create unity in this movement.

If we compare Bartók's melody to the Slovak folk songs he collected thematic similarities become apparent. The following opening of a Slovak melody Bartók set in *For Children* resembles the beginning of theme 4:

Ex.44: Beginning of a Slovakian folk tune, arranged by Bartók in *For Children*, v.4, no.27.



Melodic lines oscillating around two or three pitches seem to be characteristic in the second type of Slovak folk music Bartók writes about:

Ex.45: Extracts from Bartók's Slovakian folk collection.

[A] *Tempo giusto* *Lampert 100*

[B] *Tempo giusto* *Lampert no. 97*

[C] *Vivo, Tempo giusto* $\text{♩} = 136$

MF 1092d (from Bartók's Slovakian collection)

The opening of the melody in Ex.45c is similar to the opening of theme 5. As we can see in Ex.38c, this theme uses melodic figures derived from theme 4, in inverted form, so that the analogy to folk music is paired with a developmental device. The semi-inversion of the final 'line' in theme 5 produces a particularly characteristic Slovakian turn of phrase:

Ex.46:

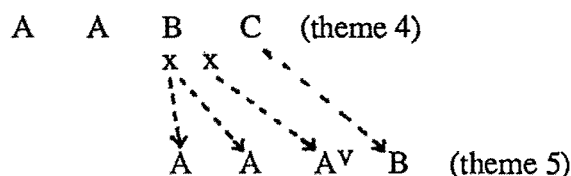
Theme 5, 'line' 4: *Slovenské Spevy II. 561, 790a.* *M.F. 1087a.*

In theme 4, the original, 'uninverted' version of the above phrase also has parallels in folk music, such as the final line in Ex.43. A similar melodic idea also occurs in the Slovak melody which Bartók arranged:

Ex.47: Slovakian folk tune; Lampert no.216, *Slovenské L'udoré Piesne* [Slovakian Folk Songs] v.2, no.932.



While theme 5 is obviously a development of previous material, it has enough character of its own for it to be labelled as a separate theme. Despite the Slovak melodic features we have shown, the scale is more typical of Hungarian folk music, with its dorian modality and strong pentatonic basis.⁷⁵ The emphasis on the interval of a P.4 is carried over from theme 4 and highlighted even more here. The importance of this interval in the first movement was stressed in relation with theme 2 (see Ex.37). Formally, the melodic line from bb.116-25 grows from the structure of theme 4. The first 'line' (bb.116-18) is an extended equivalent of bb.81-2, part of the third 'line' from theme 4 (using the Hungarian model). This is repeated with slight variation, forming a second 'line'. The third 'line' (bb.122-3) is equivalent of bb.83-4, and the fourth 'line' (bb.124-5) equivalent of bb.85-6, the final 'line' in theme 4. This structural relationship can be demonstrated:



The continuation of theme 5 in bb.126-34 does not use a strophic model but rather develops the melodic ideas further.⁷⁶

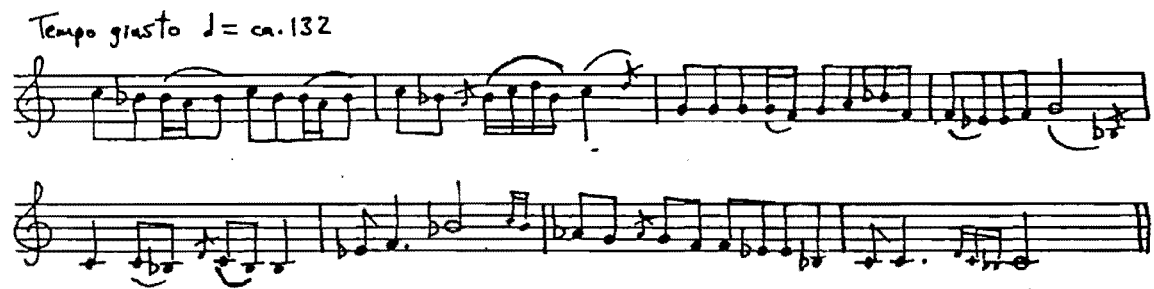
⁷⁵ E dorian is taken as the mode of the melody up to b.125, where the strophic structure ends.

⁷⁶ The melodic line eventually comes to rest on A, forming a polymodal relationship of a tritone with the harmony (on E^b). However, this does not change the E modality of the quasi-folk tune in bb.116-25.

We mentioned in passing the 'instrumental' character of the gracenotes which occur in theme 4. Is some instrumental genre from folk music being imitated, in the same way as in the flute and violin versions of the rondo theme from the finale?

While gracenotes are typical in Eastern European peasant flute and bagpipe music, the regularity with which it occurs in theme 4 is not common in folk pieces. Ornamentation such as this was applied spontaneously and more randomly, as can be seen in this flute piece from the Csík county:

Ex.48: Peasant flute piece from Gyergyótekerőpatak (Csík); Lampert no.24.



'Leaping' gracenotes of the variety seen in theme 4 can be found in both flute and bagpipe music. In the examples Bartók gives in his essay on Eastern European instrumental folk music, we find instances of gracenotes leaping onto the main note and leaping away from the main note:⁷⁷

Ex.49: Extracts from Hungarian bagpipe pieces.



⁷⁷ These extracts are taken from BBE, "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", Exs.11 and 21.

While the gracenotes in theme 4 leap onto the main note, as in Ex.49b, they leap from beneath the main note rather than from above. This is not nearly so common in bagpipe ornamentation.

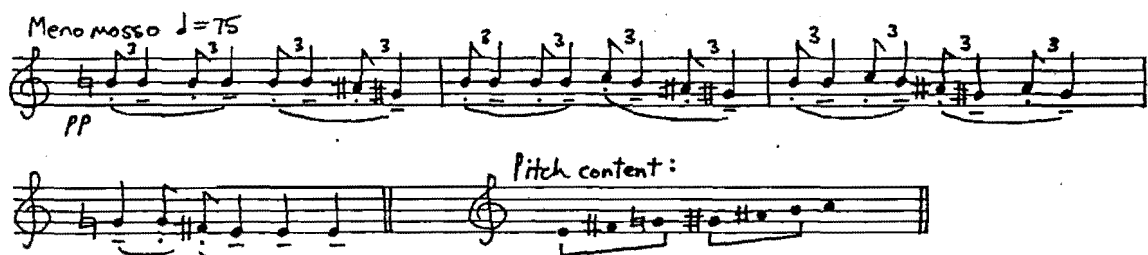
The single gracenote is, perhaps, not quite as common in flute pieces as in bagpipe ones. 'Leaping' gracenotes are considerably less idiomatic and the leap from beneath the main note is very rare.

From these observations it can be concluded that Bartók is only wanting to suggest an instrumental idiom in theme 4 rather than present an imitation of a specific genre. These particular types of gracenotes are also an idiomatic device on the piano. Even more idiomatic are the arpeggios in theme 5 (forming an extension of the gracenotes in theme 4). These arpeggios are not imitations of the strumming in zither or guitar folk pieces as it might be tempting to assume. The arpeggios are simply products of Bartók's wide pianistic experience. The terseness of Bartók's written accounts of the zither and guitar shows his lack of interest in their musical idioms.

CONTRASTS: MOVEMENT 1

There are three melodies in *Contrasts* which imitate folk song, one in each movement. In the middle section of the first movement , the following melody occurs on the violin, accompanied by harmony notes on the G-string:

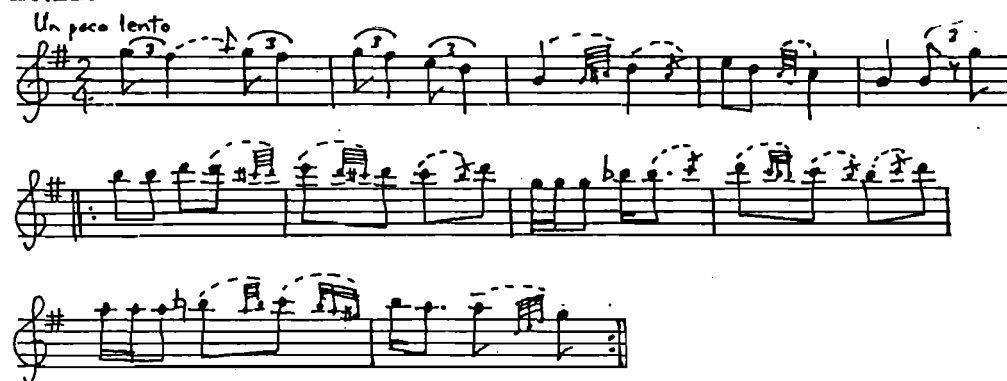
Ex.50: *Contrasts*, I, violin, melody line only, bb.30-3.



The continuation of this middle section consists of three variations on this melody, the third being a free development of melodic ideas.

The most likely inspiration for this melody comes from an Hungarian folk tune Bartók arranged in the *Rhapsody No.1* for violin, ten years earlier.⁷⁸ The tune was originally performed on the violin, but, as we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Hungarian instrumental pieces were versions of folk songs, and therefore followed the same strophic form (with the exception of the *aprája*). Béla Vikár recorded this tune before Bartók began collecting and the latter made the following transcription of it:⁷⁹

Ex.51: Peasant violin piece from Ártvátfalvi in Hungary, recorded by Vikár; Lampert no.223




This is a *kesergő*⁸⁰ or lament from ártvátfalvi in Hungary.⁸⁰ By analogy, then, we could interpret the melody from *Contrasts* as 'lamenting' in character or mood. However, only the opening line of the present example is related to Ex.50. Bartók takes this opening as his starting point and varies the line three times, the last time transposing the melody down a M.3. The form that results is $A^3A^3{}_VA^3{}_VA_V$, or AA_VA_VB , depending on whether or not we view the final 'line' as a variation on previous 'lines' or as new. In either case, these forms are not typical of Hungarian folk song. The forms, AA^5A^5A (Old' style), A^5A^5AA (New

⁷⁸ See *Rhapsody No.1*, "Lassú", 5.

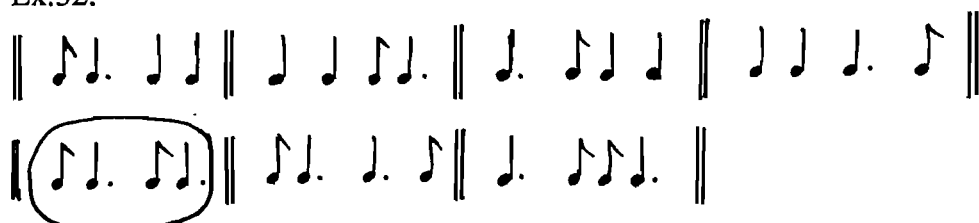
⁷⁹ Béla Vikár, M.F.99 II/a. This transcription of Bartók's appears in Lampert's *Bartók népdal-feldolgozásainak forrásjegyzéke* [The folk song sources for Bartók's arrangements], p.114, No.223.

⁸⁰ See Somfai, "Az "ártvátfalvi kesergő" az 1. rapszódiaiban" [The *kesergő* of Ártvátfalvi in Bartók's First Rhapsody], *Tizennyolc Bartók-Tanymány* [Eighteen Bartók Essays], pp.304-6.

style) and AA³A³A (New'style) do occur, but none of the songs in these forms relate to Bartók's melody in other ways.

The most obvious Hungarian feature common to both Exs.50 and 51 is the trochaic, 'dotted rhythm': . Bartók discusses 'dotted rhythm' in the section on 'Old' style melodies from *HFS*, describing how 'adjustable' or 'variable' rhythms occurred because of the peculiarities of accent in the Hungarian language.⁸¹ (Every word in Hungarian begins with an accent.) In a bar of 4/4, for instance, the regular crotchet values in *tempo giusto* are altered in the following ways:

Ex.52:



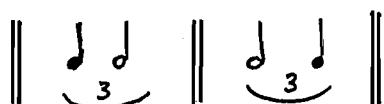
The circled rhythm is relevant to Bartók's theme. Actual time values varied according to tempo; the slower the tempo, the more abrupt the 'dotting' of the rhythm could be, giving rise to the following possibilities (among others):

Ex.53:



In faster *tempi*, the opposite process occurred with the dotted rhythm being softened:

Ex.54:



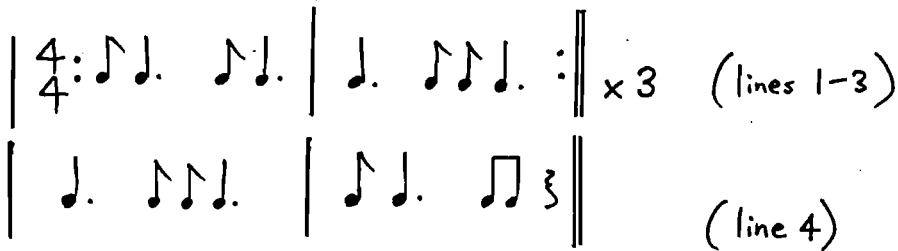
Bartók's melody (in strict time, as well) also includes softening of the dotted rhythm over the time value of a crotchet. Bartók concludes his discussion of dotted rhythm by stating,

⁸¹ *HFS*, from the 'Old' Style, group 1, III (melodies with seven syllables), pp.27-31.

"One may assert with every chance of certainty that the adjustable *tempo giusto* rhythm constitutes a mode of performance born in Hungary and manifestly Hungarian".⁸² Dotted rhythm can also be found in Bartók's Rumanian and Slovakian folk music collections but, as he explains, this is due to the influence of Hungarian folk music.⁸³

The first three 'lines' of Bartók's melody contain eight imaginary syllables and six in the final 'line'. This isometric tendency is characteristic in Hungarian folk music (and other folk musics). Likewise, only the final 'line' differs in rhythmic pattern, isorhythm also being a characteristic of some Hungarian folk songs. No.28 from *HFS*, for instance, has the following rhythmic pattern:⁸⁴

Ex.55:







In terms of pitch content, the only Hungarian feature in Bartók's melody is the descending melodic line; the range of a m.6 is small for the typical Hungarian folk song. It is the scale, however, that distances the melody from possible authentic models, as we can see from Ex.50. It could be viewed as a mixture of E lydian and E aeolian; bimodal combinations of this sort are common in Bartók's mature melodic style. The melody line, itself, suggests the scale is divided into two three-note segments, E-F#-G[♯] and G#-A#-B, with C an extension of the latter segment (and relating to B as G# relates to G[♯]). In either case, the scale is not characteristic of Hungarian folk music, or any other folk musics Bartók collected, for that matter. (Some Arabic items have similar scale patterns but these do not spread over more than about a fourth.)

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.30. Dotted rhythm is also a characteristic feature of the *verbunkos*, an Hungarian art music genre with roots in folk music- see ch.3.

⁸³ See, for instance, several items in *RFM 5* (folk music from Maramureş) which are pervaded with dotted rhythms.

⁸⁴ See also *HFS*, No.165.

In bb.34-7, the melody is repeated with a different accompaniment. There are three small alterations in the melody line: the final pairs of triplets in b.34 and b.35 contain a rest, and in b.35, the rhythm is changed from  to . The rhythmic pattern is varied further in bb.38-57, with random alternations between iambic () and trochaic () patterns. A hardening of the triplet rhythm into semiquaver patterns occurs in bb.53-6, in preparation for the reappearance of dotted rhythms at the beginning of the recapitulation (b.57ff). These types of rhythmic variations, in relation to 'adjustable' or 'variable' rhythm, are characteristic of Hungarian folk song. Bartók writes:⁸⁵

Naturally, the rhythmic combinations change from verse to verse, according to the metric idiosyncrasies of each new verse... In Hungarian peasant poems no rule or binding practice determines the succession and alternation of long and short syllables; and the tune-rhythms which these texts suggest, and which are associated with them, are correspondingly free and variable.

This freedom in the use of rhythm also applies to Bartók's use of ornamentation. In bb.45-56, for instance, the gracenotes in the violin and clarinet parts occur in a random frequency. In the clarinet part, there are two 'squeaky' gracenotes (b.45 and b.47) and no others. They appear more regularly in the violin part but without any particular pattern. As we saw earlier, gracenotes such as these can be seen as a reference to instrumental folk music, particularly bagpipe or flute performance. The free use of these ornaments in Bartók's melody is closer in spirit to authentic instrumental ornamentation than was the case in theme 4 from the first movement of the *PS*. The use of open strings in this passage is also characteristic of rural violin performance, where the player attempted to imitate the drone of the bagpipes by persistently playing open strings.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *HFS*, p.29.

⁸⁶ See ch.2, p.163.

CONTRASTS: MOVEMENT 2

The first section of the second movement of *Contrasts* consists of a dual melody line on violin and clarinet, strophic in form, the phrases being punctuated by small piano gestures.⁸⁷ Clarinet and violin lines move in contrary motion to each other, forming a free mirror-inversion. In the main, the clarinet line provides the best point of comparison with Hungarian folk melody,⁸⁸ with the violin taking over in the final phrase:

Ex.56: *Contrasts*, II, clarinet (followed by violin), opening main melodic line, bb.1-18.

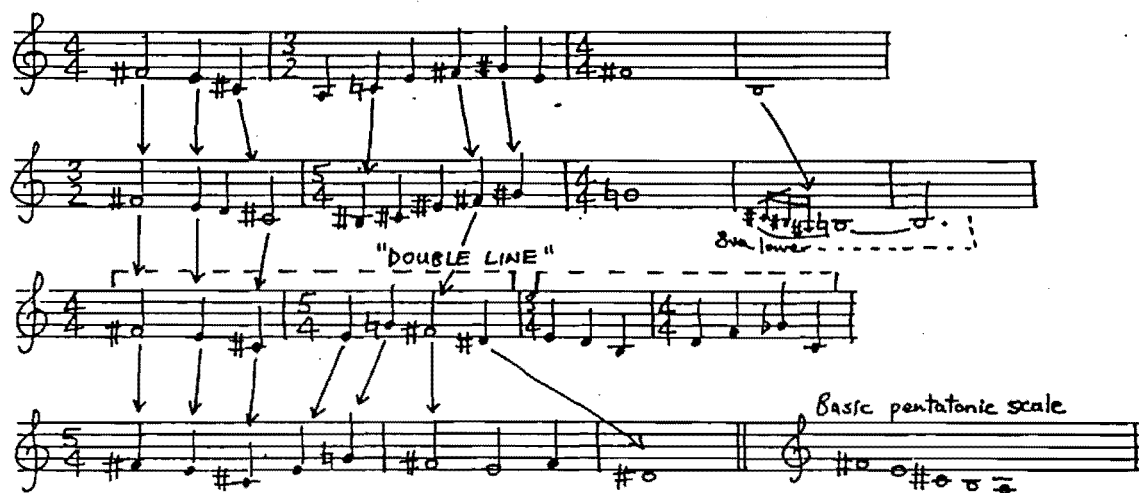
The four-'line' structure again aligns this melody with strophic folk songs. As was the case in the *PS*, the third and fourth 'lines' run into each other, with the third containing a sequence or 'double line' (explained on p.105). Using Bartók's terminology from *HFS*, the imaginary syllabic pattern of this melody is 11, 11, 7+7, 9, or Z Z z+z z(+). This pattern is similar to those from type 4 of sub-Class III from the 'Miscellaneous' Class of Hungarian folk songs, which we saw in relation to themes 2 and 4 from *PS*. In this case, however, the character of the melody is completely different to that of themes 2 and 4 from *PS* and it seems unlikely that Bartók was consciously imitating this syllabic structure.

⁸⁷ This simple alternation of instrumental groups can also be seen in the slow movements of the *Piano Concertos Nos.2 and 3*.

⁸⁸ Karpáti uses the violin line throughout; see *Bartók Kamarazenéje* [Bartók's Chamber Music], p.330 (Ex.313).

Each 'line' begins with a similar melodic idea which is then varied. We can observe these similarities more easily if lines 2, 3 and 4 are transposed so as to begin on F#, the starting pitch of the first 'line':

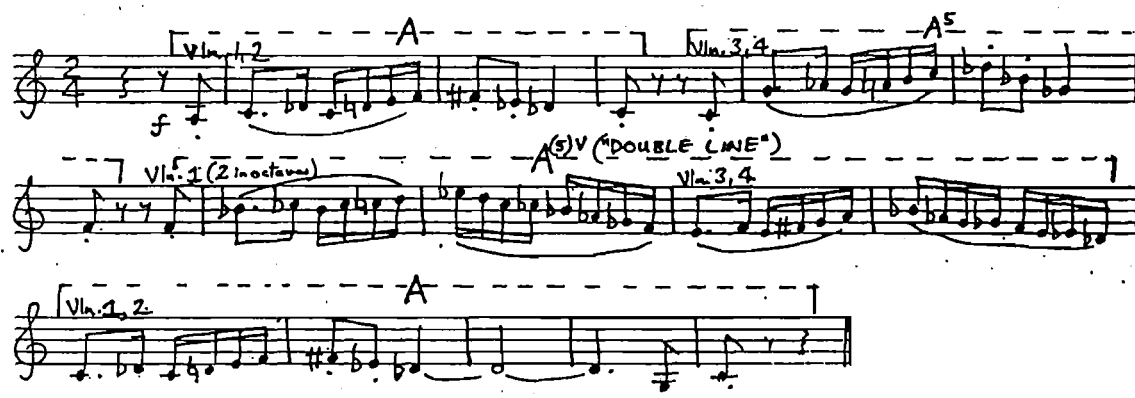
Ex.57: *Contrasts*, II, opening melodic line, 'lines' transposed to a common pitch level.



The basic melodic 'cell' of all four lines can be seen in the above example. The pentatonic nature of this 'cell' gives this melody an Hungarian undertone, despite the many 'foreign' pitches. The similarities of melodic curve and content roughly suggest the form $AA_vA_vA_v$ with each 'line' at a different pitch level. Karpáti makes an analogy with the 'Old' style, Hungarian folk structure, $AA^5A^5_vA$, which is loosely imitated in other works of Bartók. His example from *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* is given below, for the sake of comparison.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ See Karpáti, *op cit.*, p.330.

Ex.58: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, II, opening melody, strings, bb.5-19.



The sequential nature of the third 'line' of the above makes the structural link with the *Contrasts* melody even closer.⁹⁰ However, in the theme from *Contrasts*, 'line'4 does not return to the tonic (of the first 'line') as does the fourth line in the example above, and this obscures its relationship with folk song. The shifting, nebulous quality of the tonality is heightened by the use of mirror-inversion and the tonally vague piano interpolations, again distancing this theme from folk music. In this respect, a parallel can be made between this theme (and, indeed, the whole movement) and some of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* pieces, in particular no.12, "Reflection", where the left hand melody mirrors the right hand one.⁹¹

In the recapitulation (bb.29ff), the melody of the opening is no longer presented in its entirety, but is suggested by various transformations of melodic material. For instance, the piano has three chromatically altered versions of 'line'1:

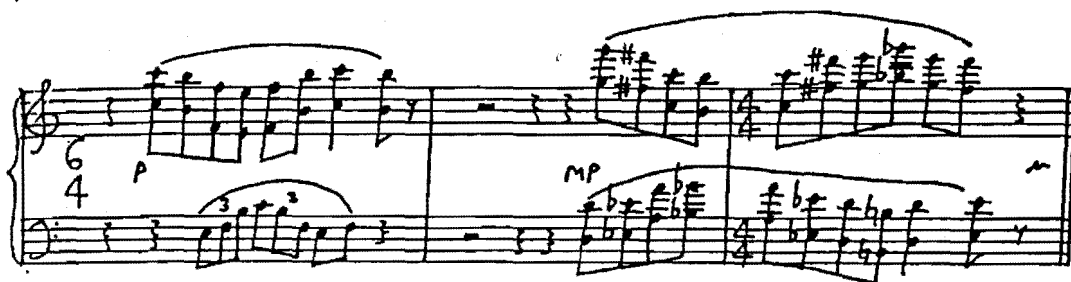
Ex.59: *Contrasts*, II, piano; (a) bb.30-2.



⁹⁰ Another example of this type of form occurs in the *Mikrokosmos* piece, "In the Style of a Folk Song", as was seen earlier, in relation to theme 2 from *PS*.

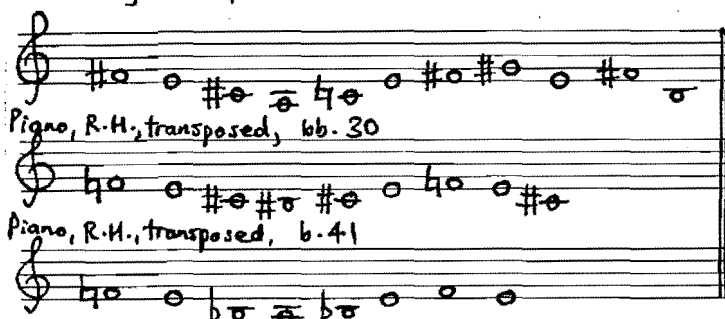
⁹¹ *Mikrokosmos*, written between 1926 and 1939. See also no.29, "Imitation Reflected".

(b) bb.41-3



(c) comparison of melodic lines

Clarinet, bb.1-4



Piano, R.H., transposed, bb. 30

Piano, R.H., transposed, b. 41

As we can see in Ex.59c, the melodic line from theme 1 is varied by contraction and expansion of intervals. The second of these variations (Ex.59b) produces gestures which are evocative of Balinese music, as Bartók knew it. Although he admitted to not having "the faintest idea" about Balinese (or Javanese) peasant music, he must have had a general knowledge of it, as he wrote a piano piece entitled "From the Island of Bali" (no.109 from *Mikrokosmos*) which begins:⁹²

Ex.60: *Mikrokosmos*, no.109, "From the Island of Bali", piano, bb.1-4.

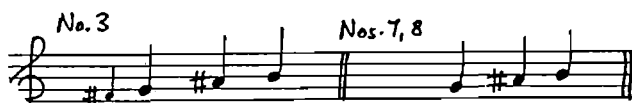


⁹² See BBE, "Some Problems of Folk Music Research in East Europe" (1940), p.192.

Bartók's comment attached to this piece was; "Impressionistic composition, possibly describing a tropical scene".⁹³ By analogy, the passages from *Contrasts* in Exs.59 (and elsewhere) could be described as 'impressionistic', the piano imitating natural sounds.⁹⁴

The chromatic transformation in Ex.59a produces the 1:3 model (alternating semitone and minor third), with a change to a 3:3 model at the end of the second phrase. Although the scale in Ex.59b is evocative of Balinese music, the 1:3 model is not. It does occur, however, in some of Bartók's Arabic transcriptions, as shown in the scales provided before each folk item: ^{94b}

Ex.61:



One of the features of the Arabic melodies is their narrow range. Bartók's own themes tend to extend the range over an octave or more whenever the 1:3 model (or other types) is employed, as is the case in the second phrase from Ex.59a. The scale in Ex.59b, however, comprises a 1:6 model (alternating semitone and tritone) which Kárpáti calls an "expanded or inverted melog".⁹⁵ The melog is an Eastern scale made up of alternating semitones and major thirds (1:4 model):

⁹³ Benjamin Suchoff, *A Guide to Bartók's Mikrokosmos*, rev. ed. (London: Boosey and Hawkes, Ltd. 1971), p.95.

⁹⁴ For further discussion, see ch.6, p.422.

^{94b} Bartók, Béla "A Biskra-vidéki arabok népzeneje [The folk music of the arabs of the Biskra region], *Szimfónia*, v.1, 1914.

⁹⁵ Kárpáti, *Bartók's String Quartets*, (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1967), pp.91. This whole section in Kárpáti's book is relevant to the discussion above. See 'Review of Literature', pp.50-1.

Ex.62:



Bartók associated this scale with Balinese music, as is evident from Ex.60. Its inverted form, the 1:6 model appears in *Contrasts*, in the melodic lines in bb.22-4, leading up to the climax. It is preceded by the 1:5 model in bb.19-21:

Ex.63: *Contrasts*, II, clarinet, bb.19-24.

Kárpáti views the 1:5 model as another "expanded melog", the major third becoming a perfect fourth. Although the 1:5 model does not occur in Balinese or Arabic folk music, in the context of this movement it is associated with a general Eastern modal quality. It also appears in "From the Island of Bali", changing to the 1:4 model in the course of the piece. Therefore, these scales are produced through a variational process and are not simply Eastern exoticisms.

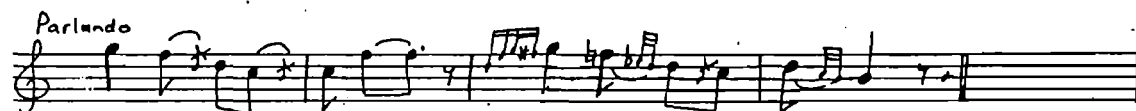
Five bars before the end of the movement, the first 'line' of the opening melody returns in a varied form. The scale used is purely pentatonic:

Ex.64: *Contrasts*, II, piano, top line only, bb.46-8.



The descending four-note phrase at the beginning is particularly characteristic of 'Old' style Hungarian folk song. We find the same pitch sequence at the beginning of an Hungarian folk song Kodály collected from Somogy county.⁹⁶

Ex.65: Opening two lines of a Hungarian folk song from the Somogy county. Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, Ex.7a.



It also appears at the start of Bartók's quasi-folk tune (and rondo theme) in *PS*, III, and in the possible folk song models for this melody which we examined earlier in the chapter. This, combined with the pure pentatonicism of the melody line, makes this statement more directly folk-like than the original version (even though it only consists of one 'line').⁹⁷ We could, in hind-sight, view the earlier melodic 'lines' as developments born from this statement. Its importance is emphasized by the elaborate harmonisation which consists of an exact mirror-inversion of the melody in the bass and both parts doubled in major thirds (plus a pedal note on A). The polymodal mixture that results covers all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale:

⁹⁶ See also the folk song models for the quasi-folk tune and rondo theme from *PS*, earlier in this chapter.

⁹⁷ A similar type of thing occurs in the *prima parte* of *String Quartet No.3*, where a folklike version of the main theme appears near the end. See Raymond Monelle's "Bartók's Imagination in the later Quartets" in *The Music Review* v.31, 1970, pp.73-4.

Ex.66: *Contrasts*, II, piano, bb.46-50.

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 46-50 of *Contrasts, II*. The score is written on two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The first measure is marked *p dolce* and the second measure is marked *piu p*. The third measure is marked *pp m*. The music is characterized by a 'perfect' setting of a folk melody, which is highlighted by the *p dolce* marking.

Therefore, Bartók highlights the 'purity' of the melodic line with a 'perfect' setting. Aurally, however, the harmonisation distances the folkiness of the melody, transforming it into a characteristic Bartók idea.

CONTRASTS: MOVEMENT III

In the middle section of the finale to *Contrasts*, Bartók dares to do what he had hesitated over in the finale of *PS* and introduces something new in tempo and character and unrelated to the outer sections. The title of the work partially justifies this (although it was added later). Further justification comes from the parallels which seem to exist between this middle section and the middle section in the first movement (bb. 30-57). Both sections feature a quasi-folk tune with Hungarian characteristics such as four-part form, descending melodic line and even the same rhythmic 'cell' (♩♩); both contain variations upon these quasi-folk tunes; both are loosely based on the key of G# (with a tendency to shift to E) and there are noticeable similarities in texture (compare I, bb.30-3 with III, 139-42).

The melody in the finale is more directly influenced by Hungarian folk song than its equivalent in the first movement. The form, for instance, is clearly A⁵A⁵AA^v, a typical 'Old' style Hungarian structure,⁹⁸ the scale is almost purely modal, D#aeolian, the melody line descends and the range is characteristically large (an octave and a fourth):

Ex.67: *Contrasts*, III, clarinet, bb.134-8.



⁹⁸ See, for instance, *HFS*, nos.67, 71a and 74a.

Also symptomatic of the pentatonic influence is the strong relationship between the subdominant and tonic degrees of the scale (D#-G#), a feature we saw in the folk song imitations in *PS*.

Another area of direct folk influence concerns the caesuras, or the pitch levels at the ends of 'lines'. This aspect is complicated by the final note of the melody (and therefore, seemingly the tonic), D#. If we determine the caesuras using D# as 1, the following pattern results: $\boxed{8}\boxed{6}\boxed{3^b}$. This is an atypical pattern for 'Old' style Hungarian folk songs. According to Bartók's analysis of eight, twelve and six syllable songs (Ex.67 imitates the six-syllable variety), $\boxed{3}$ is the most common principal caesura (the end of the second line), while line 1 usually ends on $\boxed{5}$ and line 3 on $\boxed{3^b}$.⁹⁹ There is considerable variation in the caesuras, especially concerning the first and third lines, but of all the possibilities only the third line of Ex.67 matches up, being $\boxed{3^b}$. The caesura of line 1 (8) is a "more seldom" occurrence in eight and twelve syllable songs, while the main caesura, $\boxed{6}$, is completely absent from these old style songs. It is noteworthy, however, that if we made G# the tonic note of this melody instead of D# a more characteristic caesura pattern is produced: $\boxed{5}\boxed{3^b}\boxed{VII}$. The first two caesuras are very common in the old style; the third one, \boxed{VII} , belongs to the "more seldom" category. Is there any justification for making G# the tonic and viewing the final note as the fifth degree (using Bartók's terminology, V)? In a footnote to his introduction to *HFS*, Bartók observes: "One or two tunes suggest the suspicion that even the most important note, and the note least subject to alterations, the final note, did not remain unaltered".¹⁰⁰ Kodály goes into greater depth concerning this matter and provides an example relevant to the melody in Ex.59. His starting point is a comparison of Hungarian and Mari folk songs (which are related):¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *HFS*, pp.19-20 (eight and twelve-syllable tunes), pp.25-26 (six-syllable tunes), p.28(seven-syllable tunes), p.34 (eleven-syllable tunes) and p.35 (nine-syllable tunes).

¹⁰⁰ *HFS*, pp.20-1.

¹⁰¹ Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*, p.44 (Exs.45a,b and 46)

The unexpected closing note [of the Mari folk song] reminds us that, in areas where the pentatonic system flourishes, the final is variable. Almost every Hungarian pentatonic tune ends on $g_1(la_1)$, but among Eastern peoples, tunes are found ending on $f_1(=VII,so_1)$, $b\text{ flat}(=3,do)$, $c_2(=4,re)$, and more rarely $d(=5,mi)$. At some time, this may have been possible in Hungarian tunes, too, as is shown even today in sporadic examples.

Two of the examples Kodály provides come from Bartók's collection and are variants of the same tune, with different final notes:

Ex.68: Two Hungarian folk tunes (variants of each other) collected by Bartók; from Kodály, *Folk Music of Hungary*.



As Kodály says, "In terms of Western musical theory one variant ends on the tonic (*do*), the other on the dominant (*so* 1)".¹⁰² The drop of a perfect fourth at the end of variant (b) above, corresponds to the final cadence in Bartók's melody in Ex.67. This pentatonic feature makes the true tonic of the melody ambiguous, thus confusing the caesura pattern. Despite being the final note, D# is really the fifth degree, or V, and the overall pattern, $\boxed{5}\boxed{3^b}$ \boxed{VII} , as we saw earlier. In his harmonisation, Bartók establishes G# as the tonal centre while D# is a prominent pedal-note.

Bartók's theme is isometric, with six imaginary syllables to each 'line'. (The semiquavers at the ends of 'lines' are ornamental, imitating vocal melisma.) This type of syllabic structure is common in 'Old' style Hungarian songs.¹⁰³ As we saw on p.121, the tendency towards isorhythm is also a characteristic Bartók found in some of the folk songs he collected.

What is rhythmically striking about Bartók's theme is the asymmetrical metre, 8+5/8 (or 13/8). As we saw earlier in the chapter, Bartók had discovered a few asymmetrical metres in Hungarian folk song¹⁰⁴ and more in Rumanian folk music, but none

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.47. The examples quoted are Exs.52 and 53 in this book.

¹⁰³ See *HFS*, pp.25-7.

¹⁰⁴ See *HFS*, no.34a, for instance, which has the metre, 2+3+2/8.

appear in such fast *tempi* as used by Bartók in the melody from *Contrasts*. Rather, the inspiration for this rhythmic effect comes from a different source, namely Bulgarian folk music, notable for its asymmetrical metres. Although Bartók never collected Bulgarian folk music, he studied collections of it in the early 1930s and was particularly fascinated by these rhythms. From Vasil Stoin's collection of over 6,000 Bulgarian melodies, Bartók notes that most frequent asymmetrical rhythms were 5/16 (3+2 or 2+3), 7/16 (2+2+3), 8/16 (3+2+3), 9/16 (2+2+2+3), "...and about sixteen other less common rhythmic types, not counting the rhythmically-mixed formulas..."¹⁰⁵ Due to this exposure to Bulgarian folk music, he revised a significant number of his Rumanian folk items which he found to have had Bulgarian rhythms; he confessed that earlier, he "...had not dared - if I might put it that way - to take note of them":¹⁰⁶ Of the variety of Bulgarian rhythms in this collection, the most common was 9/16 (2+2+2+3). The following example comes from Torontal in Rumania, and is quoted by Bartók in his essay "The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm":¹⁰⁷

Ex.69: Beginning of "pre loc" for violin, from Torontal, Rumania.



Bulgarian rhythms are integrated into several works of the 1930s, such as the "Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm" from *Mikrokosmos* (nos.148-153) and the third movement of *String*

¹⁰⁵ BBE, "The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm" (1938), p.44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.45.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.45, Ex.6. Bartók also quotes an Hungarian item in 8/16 (2+3+3) and a Turkish one in 10/8 (3+3+2+2), showing how the rhythmic characteristic has spread.

Quartet No.5.¹⁰⁸ The metre in the *Contrasts* melody is more complex than he found in authentic folk examples.

By adopting this asymmetrical metre, Bartók transforms the common quasi-Hungarian-folk tune into "something rich and strange". We saw a similar process in the third movement of *PS* where the character of the quasi-folk tune was changed by the irregular metres. Likewise, in the fourth movement of *Concerto for Orchestra* Bartók transforms a banal tune from a nineteenth century operetta into a characteristic and rather beautiful melody through the addition of asymmetrical metre.¹⁰⁹ In the melody from *Contrasts*, a new, Bulgarian flavour is added by the elusive and lilting rhythm.

Bartók also has a philosophical basis for combining Hungarian and Bulgarian elements in one melody. It symbolizes the harmonious unification of two different nations. The composer described this ideal in a famous letter to Octavian Beu:¹¹⁰

My own idea, however - of which I have been fully conscious since I found myself as a composer - is the brotherhood of peoples, brotherhood in spite of all wars and conflicts. I try - to the best of my ability - to serve this idea in my music; therefore I don't reject any influence, be it Slovakian, Rumanian, Arabic or from any other source.

As we shall see in Chapter 2, this philosophy is particularly associated with Bartók's finales.

Following the clarinet melody (in Ex.67) a varied version immediately appears on the violin, in bb.139-42. The interval of a P.4 with which the original version cadenced is now given more prominence, heightening the pentatonic flavour:

¹⁰⁸ The metres employed in the *Mikrokosmos* pieces are: 4(2+2)+2+3/8, 2+2+3/8, 2+3/8, 3+2+3/8, 2+2+2+3/8 and 3+3+2/8, of which the last is not an authentic folk metre. Also see nos.113 and 115 from *Mikrokosmos* and *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, I, bb.84-90, 95-8, using 2+2+2+3 and 2+3+2+2 (along with the 'normal' 3+3+3).

¹⁰⁹ The second theme from this movement quotes a melody from an operetta by Zsigmond Vincze.

¹¹⁰ *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.201.

Ex.70: *Contrasts*, III, violin, bb.139-42.

The circled notes show variations on the original melody. Aside from the ornamental semiquavers, which form chromatic alterations of the diatonic mode, these variations are not dissimilar to the types of melodic variations found in folk song. We noticed this feature in some of the melodic changes that took place in the quasi-folk tune from the finale to *PS*. (See Ex.18.)

The scalic character of Bartók's original melody (Ex.67) is subject to development in bb.148-55 and, later, in bb.161-68, where the scale become solidified into tone-clusters.

Between these two 'episodes', the melody returns in fragmented form with its contour varied considerably. In this form it is but a memory of the original. The scalic character is almost completely replaced by the fourths, again underlining its pentatonic basis:

Ex.71: *Contrasts*, III, violin and clarinet, bb.156-61.

Basic pentatonic scale:

In this chapter, we have examined six imitations of folk song in the works under study (with themes 4 and 5 from *PS* counting as one). It is worthwhile summarising the basic types of folk song that are present in these themes. From this certain trends can be observed:

- PS*, III: Vocal version of the rondo theme ('verse' 2), in episode 1, bb.76-87. Imitation of an Hungarian 'swineherd's song', a dance tune with features from the *kolomeika* melodies. In the 1920s, Bartók would have considered this melody as belonging to the 'Miscellaneous' style of Hungarian folk songs, but later would have shifted it to the 'Old' style category.
- PS*, I: Theme 2, bb.44-56: elements of the Hungarian 'Old' style and specific elements of type 4 of sub-Class III from the 'Miscellaneous' style present, implying a Slovakian influence.
- PS*, I: Themes 4 and 5, bb.76-134: Slovakian features are predominant. They could be included, however, in type 4 of sub-Class III from the 'Miscellaneous' class of *HFS*. S
- Contrasts*, I: Theme 2 (middle section), bb.30-3: features of the Hungarian 'Old' style present, but these are distanced and there is no specific type imitated.
- Contrasts*, II: Main theme: Hungarian features present, again distanced.
- Contrasts*, III: 'Contrast' theme from middle section, bb.134-38: Imitates an 'Old' style Hungarian tune, transformed by Bulgarian rhythm.

The dominant influence of Hungarian folk song is evident. Features from the 'Old' and 'Miscellaneous' styles appear most frequently while the 'New' style songs have no representation at all. This reflects trends in Bartók's folk song preferences as shown in his ethnomusicological works and folk music arrangements. As Vera Lampert's study demonstrates, Bartók favoured the 'Old' style songs when it came to making a representative selection of Hungarian items for *HFS*.¹¹¹ His classification of 8,000 items in 1924 revealed 181 'Old' style, 770 'New' style and 1527 'Miscellaneous' style melodies (excluding variants), producing the proportion of 1:4:8 between the three groups. In *HFS*, however, there are 75 'Old' style, 76 'New' style and 169 'Miscellaneous' style melodies, producing the

¹¹¹ Vera Lampert "Bartók's Choice of Themes for Folk Song Arrangements: Some Lessons of the Folk-Music Source of Bartók's Works", *Studia Musicologica*, v.24, 1982.

proportion 4:4:8;¹¹² thus, there are proportionally more 'Old' style melodies than is justified by Bartók's overall collection. Bartók's folk music arrangements also reveal this trend, the 'Old' style melodies predominating followed by the 'Miscellaneous' ones, the 'New' style being only sparsely represented from 1910 onward.¹¹³ It is to be expected, then, that his imitations of folk song in abstract works would be predominantly in the 'Old' style, with the 'Miscellaneous' style also being significant.

Another feature of Bartók's folk music arrangements that Lampert exposes is his liking for atypical as well as typical melodies. One such example is a Hungarian 'Old' style tune in 7/8 which Bartók collected and arranged in the work *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs*. Asymmetrical metres such as 7/8 are not at all typical in Hungarian folk song.¹¹⁴ In the quasi-folk tunes from the works under study, Bartók's use of the syllabic structure Z Z z+z z from type 4 of sub-Class III of the 'Miscellaneous' class in two (if not three) cases seems surprising. This feature is atypical as far as Hungarian folk song is concerned. Perhaps Bartók was attracted to this structure because of the 'double-line' (z+z) which breaks up the predictability of the normal four-line form. In effect, this particular structure is related to the so-called 'Barform', which consists of two 'Stollen' followed by an 'Abgesang' (producing the form AAB); in other words, two similar statements (melodic or otherwise) are answered by a differing statement.¹¹⁵

To conclude, the importance of folk song in Bartók's music is well exemplified in the thematic material of *PS* and *Contrasts*. Although instrumental folk music is also of considerable significance, an examination of Bartók's complete *oeuvre* demonstrates the dominant influence the vocal form had on his music. The models used in *PS* and *Contrasts* are mainly Hungarian in origin but evidence of Bartók's eclecticism has already been provided, with elements of Slovakian and Bulgarian folk music, and elements from the far East discernible in three of the themes. In addition, there is variety of genre, scale, form and

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.404.

¹¹³ Lampert, *ibid.*, Diagram 3, pp.406.

¹¹⁴ Lampert, *ibid.*, p.402.

¹¹⁵ See ch.6, pp.413-4, for further discussion.

other details which show Bartók's wide, scientific knowledge of the folk music styles he incorporates into the pieces. There is the principle of variation itself, an integral feature of folk music, which is well exemplified in the monothematic rondo movement from *PS*. Most importantly as far as Bartók's music is concerned, however, the direct folk elements do not stick out as exoticisms in an otherwise Western European style. This is partly because of the distancing devices applied to the quasi-folk tunes, and partly because Bartók's whole musical language (not just melody) is pervaded with aspects of folk music. This final point belongs to Part Two of this thesis, and the discussion of indirect folk music influences.

CHAPTER 2

IMITATIONS OF INSTRUMENTAL FOLK MUSIC

In all three works under study the influence of instrumental folk music is discernible. It occurs most prominently in the finales, but is also present (to a lesser extent) in the second movement of *VSI* and the first movement of the *PS*. Folk song was, undoubtedly, the most important manifestation of folk music for Bartók and yet the wealth of quasi-instrumental folk music to be found in Bartók's composition proves that he must also have been impressed by certain authentic instrumental idioms, despite the distortions in performance.¹ As we shall see, Bartók uses instrumental folk music from Hungary, Rumania, Ruthenia, and even North Africa, with the huge body of Rumanian music being the dominant influence.

Bartók was familiar with most peasant instruments of the time: bagpipes, violin (or fiddle), flutes of various kinds, Jew's harp, alphorn, hurdy gurdy and zither. In his essay, "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", he describes in detail the technical workings of these instruments (with the exception of the violin), giving transcribed examples of their music. The technical features and musical idioms of instrumental folk music are most thoroughly outlined in *RFM 1* (the instrumental melodies), supplemented by the instrumental section of *RFM 5* (folk music from Maramureş). Although *RFM 1* was only completed for publication in the late 1930s, many of its findings were known to Bartók from considerably earlier in his career. Therefore, the information contained in it can be referred to in our study of *VSI*, *PS* and *Contrasts*, though we must take care in using the transcriptions in it, since these are revised notations made in the 1930s. In addition to descriptions of instruments and the transcriptions, *RFM 1* discusses characteristics of

¹ See, for example, p.196.

performance, features of different genres, features of rhythm, melody and form, as well as function. The melodies are initially grouped according to function; the largest and most important group are the dance melodies, contained in Classes A and B. As regards structure, the items are divided into two broad areas: pieces with a determined structure or strophic form (labelled 'closed form' in *RFM* 5) and pieces without a determined form, based on freely structured melodic motives (labelled 'free form' in *RFM* 5).

More specific description of Rumanian or any other type of instrumental folk music will be saved for the particular imitations of genres in the works under study. While it is important to be aware of Bartók's thorough knowledge of folk instruments and their idioms, it is equally important to know which instruments or idioms were of lesser interest to him. The brief and unenthusiastic descriptions of the hurdy gurdy and zither in the essay mentioned² indicate that Bartók is less likely to have imitated the music of those instruments in his own compositions.³ In the cases of the cimbalom, an instrument usually associated with Hungary, Bartók describes it as an 'art music' instrument rather than a peasant one.⁴ According to Somfai, Bartók was not interested in this instrument and probably would not have liked it because of its associations with Hungarian popular art music. Again, his very brief essay about the cimbalom and tárogató shows his lack of enthusiasm.⁵ Despite this, several authors have spotted cimbalom-imitations in Bartók's music. When discussing *VS1*, for instance, Stevens talks about "...its reliance upon cimbalom and gamelan effects..." and the "...cimbalom-like arpeggios..." at the beginning of the work.⁶ Support is given to this

² The paragraph about the zither is simply a duplication of a part of an article by Kodály in the journal *Ethnographica*, written in 1907.

³ Except, possibly, in a disparaging manner, as in *String Quartet No.5*, V, where a hurdy gurdy is seemingly imitated at the point marked 'Allegretto con Indifferenza'. See Barbara Winrow, "Allegretto con Indifferenza". A Study of the "Barrel Organ" Episode in Bartók's Fifth Quartet", *Music Review* v.32, 1971.

⁴ Kodály calls it a folk instrument in *Folk Music of Hungary*, p.126.

⁵ See the essay "Hungarian Art-Instruments" (1924). *BBE*, p.287. The scoring of the cimbalom in *Rhapsody No.1* for violin also demonstrates Bartók's lack of familiarity with the cimbalom (the precedent for using it was Kodály's singspiele, *Háry János* which includes a prominent part for cimbalom).

⁶ Stevens, Halsey *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók*, rev.ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.205.

by the Hungarian writer, Kroó.⁷ Figurations such as occur in bb.1-9 of *VS1*, I, are more likely to have resulted from Bartók's enormous pianistic experience rather than any imitation of a cimbalom. (After all, he was a concert pianist.) One interesting peasant instrument Bartók appears not to have heard is the *gardon*, a one-stringed 'cello which is played with a piece of wood producing a percussive sound. Having heard this instrument in more recent collections of Hungarian folk music, the author was tempted to speculate that it might have inspired the famous 'snap pizzicato' effect, used in Bartók's works from *String Quartet No.4* (1927) onward (and in *Contrasts*). He did record a stringless 'cello in Arad, Rumania, but regarded it "...without any doubt as an individual oddity".⁸ He never mentions the name 'gardon' in his writings. It is risky, therefore, to make parallels of the sort above without solid evidence.

Rather than attempt a summary of the characteristics of folk instruments and their music mention will be made of the characteristics only as they concern the works under study. Bartók's own writings provide all extra information on this topic.

VIOLIN SONATA NO.1: MOVEMENT 2

In Bartók's *VS1*, it is not until approximately half way through the work that direct folk music influence is encountered. There are philosophical reasons for this. A transition takes place, from a troubled, personal world in the first part to a happier, communal world in the latter part, symbolized by the imitations of folk music.⁹ Consequently, the finale consists of a series of quasi-folk dances from various nations, following Bartók's 'brotherhood of nations' ideal.¹⁰ The first movement is, by contrast, an emotional, turbulent

⁷ See György Kroó, *A Guide to Bartók* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974), P.109.

⁸ *RFM I*, p.16.

⁹ Also see ch. 9, on the influence of folk music on form in the works under study.

¹⁰ For a description of the 'brotherhood of nations' ideal, see ch. 1, p.136

and rhapsodic statement with barely a suggestion of folk music, let alone a direct influence. In between these movements is a slow movement which contains the transitional agency, musical and aesthetic.

The first hint of instrumental folk music imitation occurs at [4], the beginning of the middle section of the second movement.¹¹ Over a reiterated, low f# on the piano, the violin has a melody which is characterised by dotted rhythms:

Ex.1: VSI, II, violin, [4] bb.1-10.

In Chapter 1, we saw that trochaic, 'dotted' rhythm was common in Hungarian folk song, and in slower *tempi* the note values were shortened, as is the case in the above example. These 'sharpened' dotted rhythms are also more idiomatic on an instrument such as the violin than the voice. The persistence of the underlying rhythm, $\text{p} \text{ } \underline{\text{d}}$, creates an isorhythmic pattern. As we saw with reference to *Contrasts*, isorhythm is a feature of several types of Hungarian folk music and its use here gives the music a certain primeval quality.¹² Touches of modality in the melody line also contribute to the folk-like nature of this passage. In

¹¹ As a reminder, the numbers in boxes referred to in VSI are rehearsal numbers; the other numbers are bar numbers. Thus, b.5[3] means five bars before rehearsal number 3.

¹² See ch.1, p.121.

Ex.1, the melody alternates between C aeolian (with D^b) and C phrygian (D^b), with a pentatonic undercurrent (C-E b -F-G-B b). These modes are, of course, coloured by chromatic alterations which distance the theme from its folk roots.

Another characteristic from Hungarian folk music is the descending melodic line, in [4] bb.1-4 and [4] bb.5-10. These two passages represent two 'lines' of an imaginary folk song, the longer second 'line' being a variation on the first. A third 'line' occurs between 7 and 8 as a sequence to the previous 'lines'.

The quasi-folk melody 'lines' in Ex.1 are given an instrumental garb, as was the case with the instrumental versions of the quasi-folk song in the *PS*. The constant use of double-stopping shows that Bartók may have had a rural violin performance in mind. The violinists he recorded would often play double stops intentionally (usually with one or two open strings), in an effort to imitate the drone of the bagpipes which was virtually obsolete. As Bartók notes, "The use of open strings as an accompanying part is most important and frequent in pieces imitating bagpipe music, the long-drawn lower open string substituting for the drone".¹³ An example of this feature can be seen in Ex.2, below, an item from Bartók's collection which he arranged in *Rhapsody No.2*.¹⁴

Ex.2: Peasant violin piece from Satu-Mare, Rumania; Lampert no.232 (*RFM 1*, no.653b).



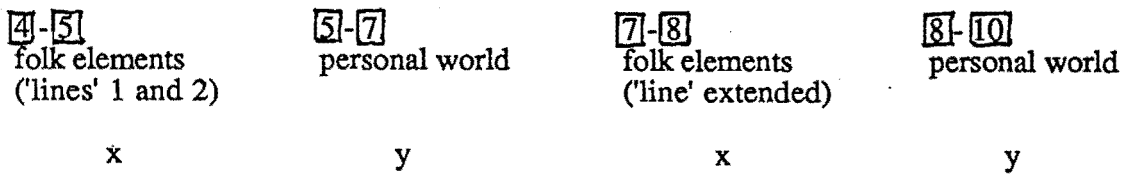
¹³ *RFM 1*, p.17.

¹⁴ See *Rhapsody No.2*, II, *Friss*, [8]-[11].

The open fifths and octaves in the example above appear in Bartók's theme in Ex.1; however, he also includes many multiple stops which would be foreign to rural violinists. He does not allow his theme to be limited technically by the folk model, and therefore prevents it sounding too obvious or banal.

In between **5** and **7** we are taken back to the troubled, personal world of the earlier parts of *VS1*, with complex, abstract melodies and harmonies contrasting with the essentially simple lines in **4-5** and **7-8**. A sequence is formed with a matching passage in **8-10**, creating a four-part structure within the middle section:

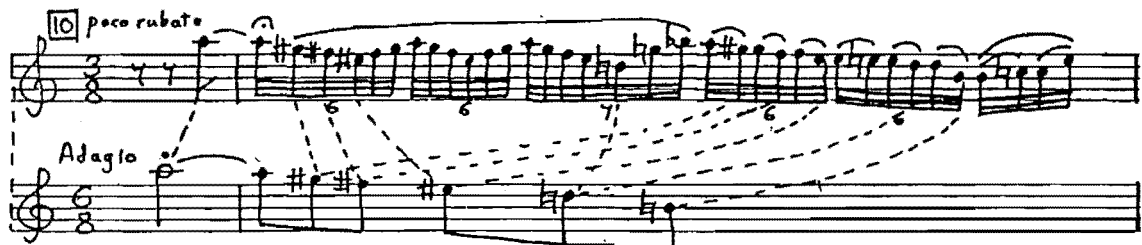
Diagram 1:

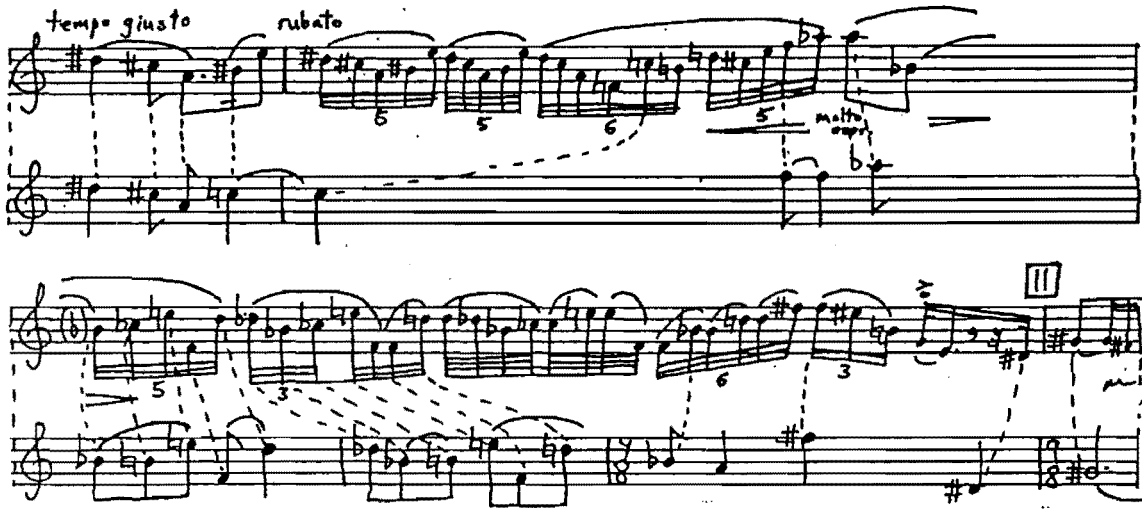


From the above, we can clearly observe a conflict between the elements of x and those of y.

Which of these prevails in the recapitulation? The bar before **10** contains a fragment of the opening melody of the movement (see bb.1-2). Unvaried, this leads us to believe it is the troubled, personal world which will continue. However, Bartók restarts the recapitulation at **10** and this time the melody is richly decorated and marked *poco rubato*, suggesting the rubato performance of rural instrumentalists. The manner of ornamentation can be seen when put alongside the original version of the melody:

Ex.3: *VS1*, II, violin, comparison of bb.1-6 with **10** bb.1-6 (dynamics omitted).

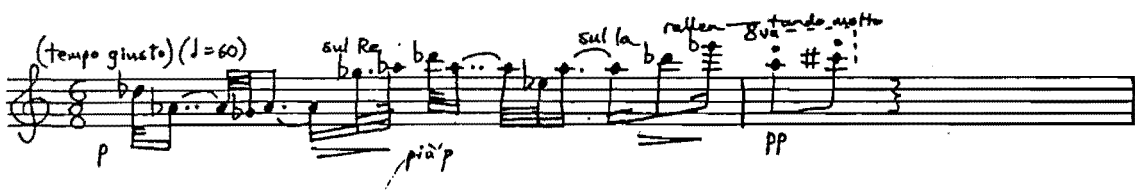




In Chapter 1 we saw a similar example of instrumental elaboration of a tune, on the peasant flute, where the original melodic line is buried beneath a wealth of decoration.¹⁵ In Ex.3 the melody is varied to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to relate it aurally to the original. Undoubtedly this is why a fragment of the original is included prior to the ornamented version, to make clear the connection between the two.

Further on in the ornamented melody other features typical of folk music appear:

Ex.4: VSI, II, violin, [11] bb.3-4.



It is the sharply 'dotted' rhythms and pentatonic undercurrent, once again, which gives this segment of melody its peculiar Hungarian quality.

¹⁵ See ch.1, p91, Ex.20b, taken from Kodály's *Folk Music of Hungary*.

The piano accompaniment in this passage is very simple, consisting mainly of conventional triadic formations:

Ex.5: *VS1*, II, piano, b.4 11 - 11 b.4.

This style of accompaniment is similar to that used in Bartók's earlier arrangements of folk songs, an example being *Eight Hungarian Folk Songs*, Nos. 2 and 4. Bartók says of such accompaniments that "...accompaniment, introductory and concluding phrases are of secondary importance, and they only serve as an ornamental setting for the precious stone: the peasant melody".¹⁶ In Ex.3, the decorated violin melody is the "precious stone"; the piano accompaniment a basic "setting" for it.

Ornamentation of the first section continues in b.1 12 - 13 b.5. There are no more specific folk elements, however, until the dotted rhythms of the middle section return in the brief coda as a memory of the earlier conflict between 'personal' and 'peasant' worlds. Bartók leaves his aesthetic solution based on folk music until the finale.

¹⁶ BBE, "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music" (1931), p.341.

VIOLIN SONATA: MOVEMENT 3

The third movement of *VS1* represents the first of Bartók's finales based on quasi-folkloristic thematic material and also the first of his characteristic quick last movements. 1911 to 1919 was the period of Bartók's slow conclusions (the third movement of *String Quartet No.2* is an example), apart from works based on authentic folk music. Somfai places *VS1* at the beginning of a period from 1921 to 1928, whose works contain "...ecstatic dance finales in quick tempo, with themes in the manner of folk music".¹⁷ He separates this period from the period between 1928 and 1945 on the basis of Bartók's use of symmetrical 'bridge' form in this later stage. A factor in common with all the finales from 1921 onward is their capacity to resolve tensions from earlier movements in quick and often more directly folk-inspired music. Folk music from different nations is imitated, as was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Although Somfai separates 'collage' finales, such as the one in *Dance Suite*, from the finale of *VS1* (and others) the distinction seems to be a fine one considering the overriding common idea, that of a musical representation of the 'brotherhood of nations' ideal. Even when different folk music genres from the same country are imitated, as in the *PS* (finale), the portrayal of these various styles within a single 'dance' movement still suggests a communal theme.

Following a brief introduction, theme 1 is announced with the melody on the violin:

Ex.6: *VS1*, III, violin, bb.5 [1]-[4].

Allegro molto, ♩ = 144-138 sul sul a l Segno 3/8

accel... al LINE ONE -

f con fuoco

LINE TWO -

1

¹⁷ Somfai, László "Per Finire": Some Aspects of the Finale in Bartók's Cyclic Form", *Studia Musicologica*, v.11, 1969, p.395.

LINE THREE

LINE FOUR

TAILPIECE

EXTRA LINE

(Cadential extension)

sf

The style of this melody is similar to that of the violin pieces Bartók collected in Maramureş, Rumania. Several examples from his collection have the same *moto perpetua* character in a fast, strict tempo, with strings of semiquavers. They can be found in section (d) of *RFM* 5, which consists of dance melodies. Kárpáti draws attention to No.187(b), in particular:¹⁸

Ex.7: "Jocul barbatesc (apsaneste)" for violin from Maramureş, Rumania; F.2155a (first verse only), *RFM* 5, no.187b.

Allegro molto, ♩ = 152-160

F.2155a

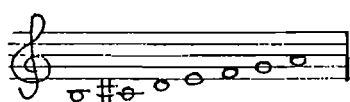
¹⁸ See Kárpáti's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music* 4, p. 11.

The features in common between Ex.6 and Ex.7 are the motivic ideas (such as the anticipatory-note sequence), melodic contours, bowing techniques, and structure. Both are basically in four parts, although Bartók's melody has an extra line following the 'tailpiece' to line four. Bartók describes the form of Ex.7 as AAB_v, common enough in this area of Rumania. However, there is a strong suggestion that 'lines' three and four are transposed versions of 'lines' one and two. Compare b.2 and b.3 with b.10 and b.11 of Ex.7, for instance. This would give the form A₅A₅AA. The melody in Ex.6 has the basic form AAA₃A₃, with each line being varied considerably but well defined by the rests and long notes which punctuate the melody. Therefore, invented melody and authentic melody have a formal similarity.

The tempo of these melodies is also similar. In later works, Bartók often varied the tempi of his quasi-folk melodies in order to distance the folk influences from his own musical ideas, as we saw in Chapter 1 with regard to the finale of the *PS*.¹⁹

The scale of Bartók's melody is different to that of the melody in Ex.7, which is basically A dorian. The type of scale Bartók uses belongs to a category labelled *heptatonia secunda* by the Hungarian musicologist, Lajos Bardós, and which was discussed in the 'Review of Literature'.²⁰

Ex.8: *heptatonia secunda* scale, third mode.



The scale employed is the third mode of the *heptatonia secunda* (referring to the terminology outlined in the 'Review of Literature'). It is one of three modes which do not contain the interval of a perfect fifth between the first and fifth degrees of the scale. As Kárpáti suggests, this avoidance of the traditional tonic-dominant relationship in scale construction is

¹⁹ ch.1, p.75.

²⁰ See *heptatonia secunda*, *Magyar Zene* [Hungarian Music] v. III/6, 1962, pp.583ff. Also see 'Review of Literature', p.51-2.

a feature Bartók deliberately incorporates into the melody.²¹ The same device is used in the opening theme from the second movement of *Sonata No.2* for violin and piano, where the seventh mode of the *heptatonia secunda* is used (plus altered pitches at the end of the melody):

Ex.9: *Sonata No.2* for violin and piano, II, violin, bb.5-8.



An additional feature of the mode of *heptatonia secunda* used in Ex.9 is the prominence of a segment of the 1:2 model (B-C#-D-E-F-G), emphasized by the scalic character of Bartók's melody. This segment becomes important in later developments, as will be shown in Chapter 7.

A feature of Bartók's melody from *VS1* which is not to be found in the Maramureş collection (nor in his other collections as far as I can ascertain) is the ascending nature of the anticipatory-note sequences. There are numerous examples of descending anticipatory-note sequences. Apart from Ex.7, Nos. 173i and 146c from *RFM 5* are two further pieces which have this feature. None, however, have ascending patterns.

Although Ex.7 has no accompaniment, many of the instrumental dance pieces from Maramureş feature a guitar accompaniment consisting of reiterated perfect fifths:²²

Ex.11: Guitar accompaniment to folk pieces from Maramureş, Rumanian in Bartók's collection.



²¹ See Kárpáti's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music 4*, p.10-11.

²² The guitars Bartók recorded had two strings, tuned a fifth apart, which were not 'stopped'. See *RFM 5*, pp.29-30.

Accompaniments such as this imitate the drone of the bagpipe, which originally was the main instrument for rural dance music.²³ The melody from the sonata is accompanied by an elaborate drone on the piano, perhaps in imitation of the folk music drone:

Ex.12: *VSI*, III, piano, bb.5 1 ff.



However, it is dangerous to assume that because Bartók has arpeggiated chords²⁴ he is imitating the strumming of the guitar. The Maramureş recordings show there is no aural connection between the two. The rolled chords are more likely to be an idiom born from Bartók's wide pianistic experience.

Another possible source of inspiration for theme 1 is the piano part to Stravinsky's *Pribaoutki* (for voice and piano, written in 1918), a work which Bartók analyses briefly in an essay written in 1920.²⁵ The accompaniment to No.3 ("Le Colonel") shows a resemblance to Bartók's piano part:

²³ In the Introduction to *RFM* 5, Bartók says, "Probably in earlier times the bagpipe was the only instrument used for dances". See p.24.

²⁴ The arpeggio symbol in the left hand is not in the wrong place. This was Bartók's way of signifying an upward-moving arpeggio as opposed to the normal downward-moving one. Later in life, Bartók used arrows to indicate the direction of the arpeggio - see for example *PS*, I, bb.116-25.

²⁵ See *BBE*, "The Influence of Folk Music on the Art Music of Today"(1920), pp.316-17.

Ex.13: *Pribaoutki* for voice and piano by Stravinsky, no.3, piano, bb.1-3, 17-19.

As well as the reiterated bass note and the arpeggiated right hand part there is also a parallel between the anticipatory-note figures.

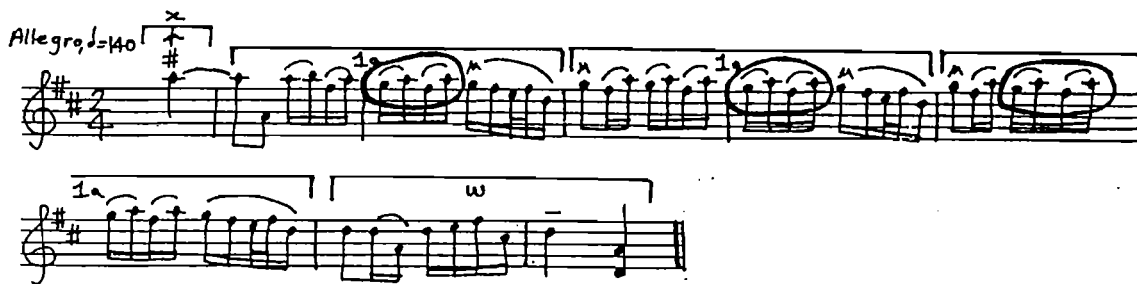
While theme 1 is strophic in form, it is built from several small, melodic motives. The potential of these melodic motives to be used in a formally free manner is shown in the 'extra' line at [3] (see Ex.6). Two motives, in particular, are developed in the following way:

Ex.14: *VSI*, III, violin, development of motives in theme 1.

This use of motives in a free manner has a precedent in Rumanian folk music. In the Maramureş collection, for instance, Bartók divides the dance melodies into two groups:

those with 'closed form' (i.e. strophic form, usually consisting of four lines), and those with 'free form', which "...are made up of motives of one or several measures which are repeated without interruption and which are without fixed form or ending".²⁶ The following piece from Maramureş is in 'free form', with one motive being repeated and varied slightly:

Ex.15: "De baut" for violin from Maramureş, Rumania; *RFM* 5, no.141b.



The fragment of motive 1a circled above also occurs in Exs. 6 and 7.

Bartók collected a large number of 'free form' folk pieces in other parts of Rumania and these are represented by class B of *RFM* 1 (pp.368ff), which Bartók brought together in the 1930s. Not only did he provide analysis of the various melodic motives, as exemplified in Ex.15, but also made "An attempt at a systematic grouping of the motifs of class B", in an appendix to this volume (pp.591ff). This analytical approach to instrumental folk music based on motives as seen in his Maramureş collection appears to have influenced Bartók's compositional thinking in this movement of *VSI*. In Ex.14, an analysis of the melodic line is made in terms of motives, which is quite possibly the way the composer conceived it. In Ex.14b, the motive is subjected to 'shifted rhythm', a feature of instrumental folk music Bartók was fond of (described in Chapter 1 - see p.92). Likewise, from [4] to [8] we can analyse the melody according to the free use of motives:

²⁶ *RFM* 5, p.24.

Ex.16: VSI, III, violin, analysis of melodic motives in [4]-[7] 8.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for violin, measures 4 through 7. The notation is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is annotated with various melodic motives and performance instructions.

- Measure 4:** Labeled with a circled '4'. It contains two phrases, 1a and 2a, connected by a brace. The first phrase (1a) is marked *sf* (sforzando).
- Measure 5:** Labeled with a circled '5'. It contains two phrases, 1b and 2b, connected by a brace. The second phrase (2b) is marked *sf*.
- Measure 6:** Labeled with a circled '6'. It contains two phrases, 1a and 2c, connected by a brace. The first phrase (1a) is marked *sf*. The second phrase (2c) is marked *sf*. There is a 'stop-gap' motif indicated by a bracket and the text 'stop-gap motif'.
- Measure 7:** Labeled with a circled '7'. It contains two phrases, 1a and 2c, connected by a brace. The first phrase (1a) is marked *sf*. The second phrase (2c) is marked *sf*. There is a 'tail-piece' indicated by a bracket and the text 'tail-piece'.
- Measure 8:** Labeled with a circled '8'. It contains two phrases, 1a and 2c, connected by a brace. The first phrase (1a) is marked *sf*. The second phrase (2c) is marked *sf*. There is a 'tail-piece' indicated by a bracket and the text 'tail-piece'.

Other annotations include 'allarg.' (allargando), 'accel.' (accelerando), 'a tempo', 'Molto (♩=60)', 'ff' (fortissimo), 'mf' (mezzo-forte), and 'al' (allegro). The tempo is marked 'Tempo I. (♩=132)'.

Here again, 'shifted rhythm' is present in [4] bb.3-5 and [4] bb.7-9. Another technique borrowed from instrumental folk music is the repetition of a small melodic fragment, as in [5] bb.4-6 and [6] bb.1-3. This phenomenon which occurs in bagpipe music was imitated on the violin and flute in the pieces Bartók collected. He explains the phenomenon, thus: "When the [bagpipe] player has to tune his instrument during the performance of a piece and does not want [to] interrupt it, he plays a kind of 'stop-gap' motif (see Nos.546 and 550) with his left hand and does the tuning in the meantime with his right".²⁷ The 'stop-gap' motive carried over into violin music, despite its lack of function, and was obviously an effect Bartók appreciated as it can be found in his setting of the opening folk melody of *Rhapsody*

²⁷ RFM I, p.21.

No.1 for violin, and also appears in original compositions such as the sonata presently under study, *Contrasts*, III, bb. 30-4,²⁸ and *Divertimento*, III, bb. 36-62.

Although 'free form' folk pieces are based on the alternation of motives, the rapid, merging alternation of motives which occurs in bb.3-1[6] (Ex.16) is not typical of folk music. This gradual mixing of two melodic ideas is a compositional device, building up tension which is released by the simple 'stop-gap' motive that follows. This device appears conspicuously in the *String Quartets Nos.3* and *4*, but involving more abstract melodic ideas.²⁹

The 'tail-piece' in Ex.16, a purely rhythmic idea, represents a development on 'tail-pieces' from earlier passages, namely b.2 [1], [1] bb.4-6, [2] bb.1-3, bb.6-1 [3] and others (see Ex.6). Such 'tail-pieces' to melody lines also occur in instrumental folk music, although not to the same degree as in Bartók's melody:

Ex.17: 'Tail-pieces' to Rumanian instrumental folk items; (a) *RFM I*, no.415 (b) Lampert no.134 (*RFM I*, no.332).



Bartók's 'tail-pieces' are longer and consequently more significant than any folk models, if indeed it is those on which the composer based his idea.

Some of the 'closed form', Rumanian pieces Bartók collected have "...a kind of coda or interlude"³⁰ added to them, equivalent to the *aprája* in Hungarian instrumental music. These codas are also based on melodic motives in 'free form'. Bartók was suspicious of the origin of the Rumanian ones, since they were often played in a high

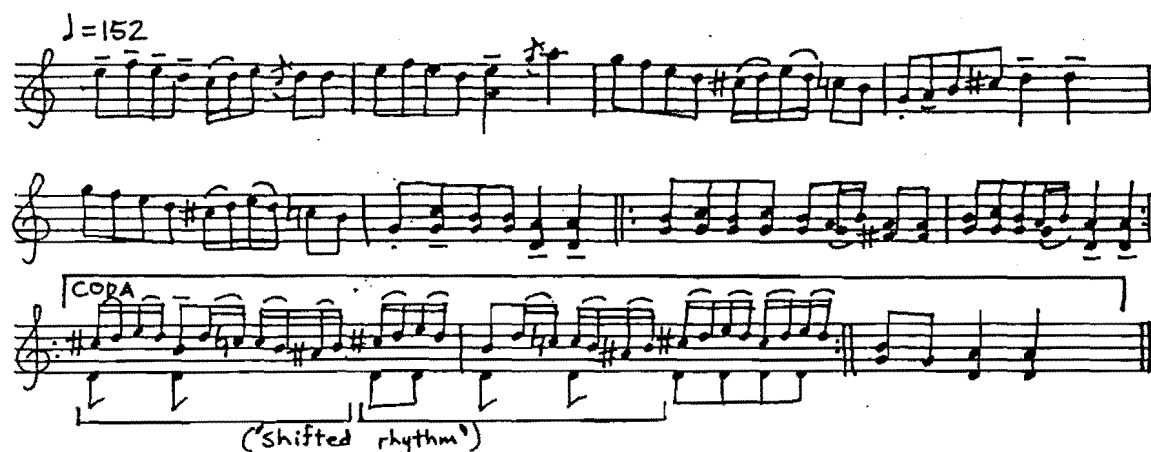
²⁸ Here, the 'stop-gap' motive allows time for the violinist to change from the 'mistuned' violin to the properly-tuned one!

²⁹ See *String Quartet No.4*, I, bb.134-45, and V, bb.238-330 approx., and *String Quartet No.3, Seconda Parte*, coda, bb.5-10.

³⁰ *RFM I*, p.46.

position on the E-string which was more likely to be a gipsy mannerism than a part of the authentic folk piece. As Bartók says, "Their presence in Rumanian material probably indicates foreign or urban influence".³¹ However, he did use a Rumanian folk piece with coda in his *Rhapsody No.2* for violin, the original transcription of which follows:

Ex.18: "Hora cu perina" for violin from Rumania; Lampert no.236 (*RFM 1*, no.414); arranged in *Rhapsody No.2* for violin, [38]-[39].



The use of *aprája* in instrumental pieces is commented on (and illustrated) by Bartók in his essay on Eastern European folk instruments.³² In this instance, he deals with bagpipe music from Hungary and Slovakia.

Perhaps Bartók had this form of tune-plus-coda in mind when writing theme 1 of this movement from *VS1*. Up to [3], there is an instrumental melody in four parts which is followed by an improvisatory coda ([3]-[4]). In fact, [4]-[8] could also be viewed as part of the coda with its free alternation of motives. Bartók found examples of the coda in a folk piece out-stripping the melody in length, so the hypothesis above is not as unlikely as it seems.³³

Although the section from [4]-[8] is based on free use of motives, there is also the suggestion of 'closed form'. This is due to the way three successive phrases begin in the

³¹ *Ibid.* p.46.

³² "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", *BBE*, pp.252-3.

³³ See, for instance, *Ibid.*, Ex.15, pp.250-1.

same way (see [4]b.1, [4]b.5 and [5]b.1), with the rests dividing these phrases up and creating a quasi-strophic structure. It is interesting to note that Bartók discovered some examples of folk pieces "...in transitional state, that is, as if intermediary between simple motif structure and determined structure, for example, Nos.644, 651 and perhaps 645 [from *RFM I*]".³⁴ It is possible this 'transitional state' is represented in Bartók's theme by the section, [4]-[8], with its mixture of 'free form' and 'closed form'.

The first theme, or rondo theme, returns twice, both times varied and shortened. The original four-'lined' melody is replaced by three-'lined' ones. In the third appearance (the start of the recapitulation), the tail-piece to each line is substituted by a melodic motive from [3] bb.6-10. The insertion of this motive adds continuity to the melody line, bringing it closer in style to authentic folk pieces (see, for instance, Ex.7). It will also be noticed that 'lines' two and three of this third rondo appearance are equivalent to 'lines' three and four of the original rondo theme (compare Ex.19 with Ex.6). The second 'line' is made redundant by the additional motivic material added between the 'lines':

³⁴ *RFM I*, p.50. It is not possible to confirm if Bartók had recognised this 'transitional state' in Rumanian instrumental pieces by 1921, the time of composing this movement.

Ex.19: VSI, III, violin, second and third rondo statements, bb.5 [23]-[25] ff and [33]-[35] bb.4 ff.

The *moto perpetuo* character of the first theme also returns in the coda of the movement ([46] ff). There is no 'closed form' in the melody line here, but rather familiar motives strung together in a free manner. 'Shifted rhythm' is prominent, especially in [48] bb.1-6 of the violin part, where it has two bars of 3/4 across three bars of 2/4 in the piano leading into further metric complications. The accented off-beats of the piano recall a characteristic of rural violin performance which Bartók describes, as follows: "The performance generally is very rhythmic. Invigorating accents are frequently put on either odd or even eighths of the 2/4 measure; sometimes the two kinds of accentuation are alternated".³⁵ This feature can be

³⁵ RFM I, pp.16-17.

seen in Bartók's arrangement of a Rumanian dance melody in *Rhapsody No.2* for violin, at the beginning of the *Friss* movement.³⁶

Theme 2 makes its bold appearance at [8]. The melody line displays a dual folk music influence similar to the manner of the quasi-folk song in the third movement of *Contrasts*, where Hungarian and Bulgarian elements combined. It is possible to find both Hungarian and Ruthenian elements in this theme, as we shall see.

The most obvious source of direct imitation comes from a Ruthenian dance melody Bartók collected in Maramureş, Rumania, the same county that the possible model for theme 1 came from (see Ex.7). Bartók's collection of Ruthenian folk music is small, totalling thirty-eight wax cylinders, each containing two or three items.³⁷ Although transcribed, this collection never appeared as a separate, published volume. It was, however, significant to Bartók. As an ethnomusicologist, he traced a possible link from the Ruthenian *kolomeïka* songs to Hungarian 'swineherd songs' (as we saw in ch.1) and further to the Hungarian *verbunkos* and the Rumanian *Ardeleana* pieces.³⁸ As a composer, he used four *kolomeïka* melodies in his work, *Forty four Duos* for two violins (1931) and set a dance melody in the *Rhapsody No.2* for violin.³⁹ This melody, shown in its original form below, is the same one that possibly inspired theme 2 from the third movement of *VSI*, also shown below:

Ex.20: (a) "Uvevan'yi" for violin from Maramureş, Rumania (but Ruthenian in origin); Lampert no.235.

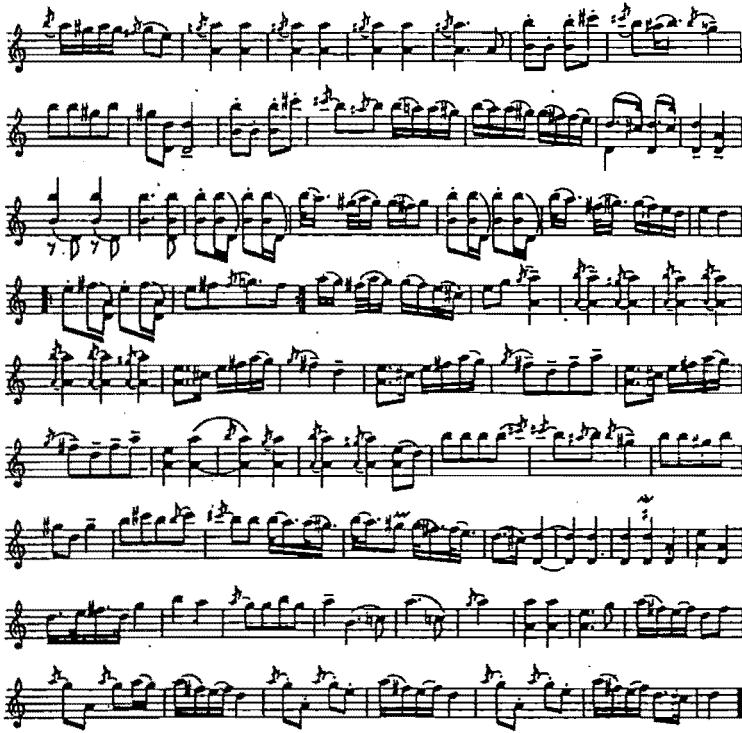


³⁶ For further examples of off-beat accents in the works under study, see *PS*, I, bb.2ff, *Contrasts*, III, bb.94-102, 214-20.

³⁷ In Bartók's phonograph collection, these items cover M.H. 1859-1897.

³⁸ See *RFM* I, p.49. For a description of the *Kolomeïka* songs see pp.7-8 of ch. 1.

³⁹ See bb.18-34, *Friss*. This setting is the subject of an essay by Somfai, entitled "Bartók 2, hegedürapszódíájának rutén epizódja", [A Ruthenian Episode in Bartók's Second Rhapsody], *Muzsika* 14/3, (March 1971), pp.1-3.



(b) *VS1*, III, violin, Theme 2, [8]-[10] b.8.

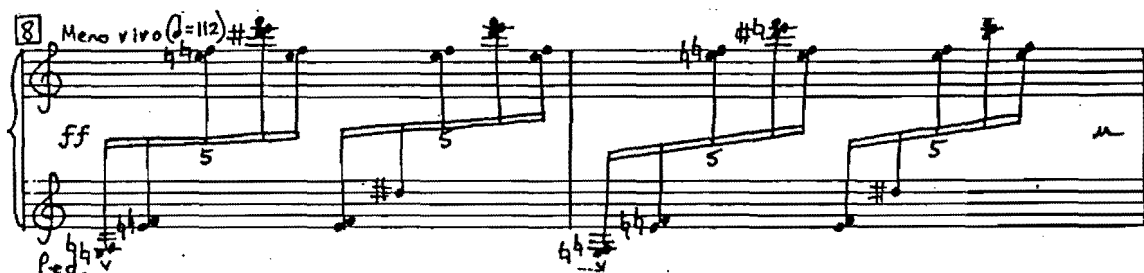


The features in common are: (a) strident, repeated octave and multiple stops, (b) octave stops preceded by single grace notes, from above and below the main note, (c) descending melodic figurations, rapid and ornamental in character. The folk piece itself is clearly a bagpipe

imitation. Droning is represented by the persistent multiple stops and the gracenotes are characteristic of bagpipe performance.⁴⁰ The melody is constructed on motives, in the same way as many of the bagpipe pieces from Rumania. According to Bartók the instrumental melodies built on motives were "...an inherent part of bagpipe music".⁴¹

We can draw a similar conclusion from Bartók's melody in theme 2. The character of the bagpipes is enhanced by the rough, droning quality of the piano accompaniment which sustains an arpeggiated three-note 'cluster-chord':

Ex.21: *VS1*, III, piano, [8] ff.



There are features of theme 2 which suggest a different source of folk influence. The basic scale of the melody, for instance, is E dorian (E,F#,G,A,B,C#,D), with the chromatic gracenotes being decorative 'unessentials'. This mode has a definite pentatonic undercurrent, as can be seen in the following phrase:

Ex.22: *VS1*, III, violin, b.1 [9]-[9]b.4, and the pentatonic basis.



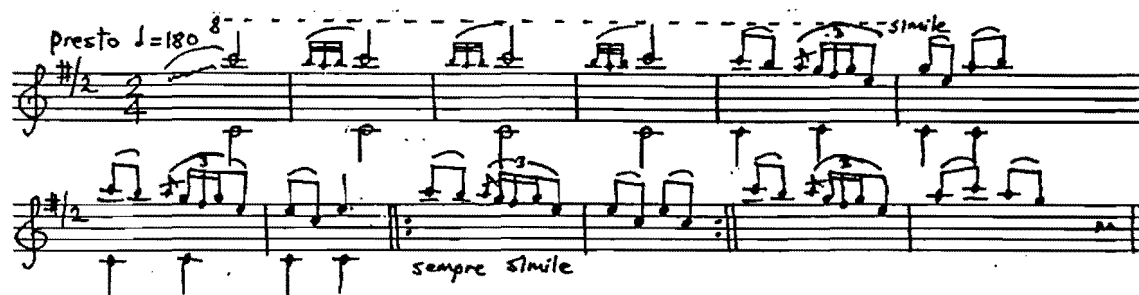
⁴⁰ Further description of features of bagpipe music are provided on pp.95-8.

⁴¹ *RFM I*, p.51. The instrumental melodies built on motives belong to type (d) in this volume.

Pentatonicism of this kind is typical of Hungarian folk music. Could it also be a feature of Ruthenian music? Bartók answers this when he writes, "...pentatonicism is not present in either the older Slovakian or the Ruthenian folk song; neither is it to be found among the Hungarian population of Rumania, excepting in Maramureş and Szatmár-Szilágy-Mezőség areas".⁴² As proof of this, the scale used in Ex.20(a) is basically D lydian (or D major), without a basis in the Hungarian pentatonic scale. Therefore, while the genre seems to be Ruthenian, the pitch content used is Hungarian. The use of the dotted rhythm, ♩, is also an Hungarian characteristic as we saw earlier in the chapter.

Karpáti quotes the following melody from the Maramureş collection as a possible source of inspiration for theme 2:⁴³

Ex.23: "Invaritita" for Jew's Harp from Maramureş, Rumania; *RFM* 5, no.152.



The similarities between this melody and Bartók's are: (a) the opening gestures, (b) rapid, descending phrases, (c) motivic structure. Although played on a Jew's harp it is also a bagpipe imitation - bagpipe music could be imitated on instruments other than the violin, as Bartók points out in *RFM* 1. However, the remaining seven lines of this transcription (not

⁴² *RFM* 5, p.20.

⁴³ *RFM* 5, No.152. See Karpáti's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music* 4, p.11.

shown in Ex.23) do not share similarities with theme 2. The actual sound of the Jew's harp is small and indistinct compared to the bagpipes or violin, and, as a consequence, seems unlikely to have inspired a vigorous, strong melody such as that in theme 2.

To sum up then, theme 2 has both Ruthenian and Hungarian qualities, with the bagpipe idiom being imitated. As was the case in *Contrasts*, these influences are unified, thereby symbolizing Bartók's 'brotherhood of nations' ideal in music.

Theme 3 follows theme 2 almost immediately. However, at the conclusion of theme 3, theme 2 returns in a varied form, creating a symmetrically formed episode between statements of the rondo theme. The dorian flavour of the original theme 2 is replaced by a lydian flavour (due to the prominence of the raised fourth degree), although Bartók extends the scale pattern into *heptatonia secunda* (in its 'acoustic' form) and *heptatonia tertia* forms.⁴⁴ The lydian flavour is more pronounced in the recapitulation where the bimodality between melody and harmony is omitted, with the latter based on E, also. The lydian mode appears in Rumanian folk music and, in particular, Slovakian folk music. As Bartók writes, "...specially characteristic of Slovak music is the use of the Lydian mode."⁴⁵ Various melodic motives and rhythms, circled below, have a Rumanian character, also, especially 'a' which becomes a 'stop-gap' motive in [21] bb.3-8:

Ex.24: VSI, III, [18] b.5- [21] b.4 .

⁴⁴ See ch. 7, p. 47.5.

⁴⁵ BBE, "Slovak Folk Music" (1924), p.128. Also see Ladislav Burlas's essay "The Influence of Slovakian Folk Music on Bartók's Musical Idiom" in *International Musicological Conference in Commemoration of Béla Bartók 1971*.

19 *ff* *sempre simile* *

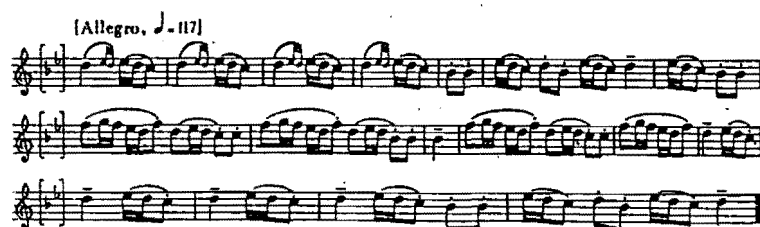
20 *p* *f subito* *mf* *ff* *p* *f subito* *mf* *

21 *p* *cresc.* *mf* *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

The asymmetrical rhythms basically distance the melody from authentic instrumental folk music, in a similar way to the rhythms in the rondo theme of *PS III*. Alternatively, they could be seen as an influence from Rumanian *colinde*. When discussing this particular influence, Breuer states: "...in such works where the thematic material is Máramaros [Maramureş] Roumanian [sic] in character,- as, for example in the finale of I Violin-Piano Sonata, encompassing the style of the Roumanian [sic] violinists - the resultant character

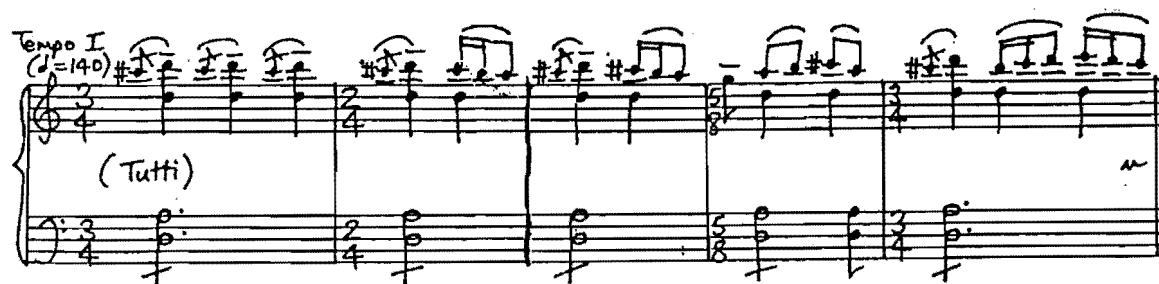
[from the asymmetrical rhythms] is obvious".⁴⁶ There is, however, no reason why a special rhythmic characteristic of *colinde* should directly enhance the Rumanian folk flavour of a passage which imitates an instrumental idiom unrelated to the *colinde*. Any possible influence from *colinde*-rhythms must be considered indirect, as was the case in the rondo theme from *PS*, III. It might be possible to draw a direct analogy between the asymmetrical rhythms in Ex. 24 and those Bartók found in Rumanian instrumental music, itself. Consider the following Rumanian violin piece which Bartók arranged in the *Sonatina* for piano (1915):

Ex.25: "Joc" for bagpipe from Bihor, Rumania; Lampert no.124.



Bartók's rhythmic asymmetry is more complex than is to be found in folk models, however, and, consequently, less 'authentic' in its imitation. The same observations can be made about a theme from *Dance Suite*, written two years later, which shows a resemblance to the theme from *VS1*. As far as pitch content and idiom (the bagpipes) are concerned, this theme is more directly influenced by folk music which is appropriate in a quasi-programmatic work like *Dance Suite*:

Ex.26: *Dance Suite* for orchestra by Bartók, III, piano reduction, [26]bb.1-4 (ff).



⁴⁶ Breuer, "Kolinde Rhythm in Bartók's Music", *op. cit.*, p.54.

In Ex. 24, the off-beat chords in the piano part are a reference to the off-beat accents of instrumental folk performance. Motives circled and marked 'b' refer back to motives from theme 1, bb. 5-3 [4]. From this, it would appear Bartók is attempting to weld together theme 2 with elements of theme 1, thus making the return to theme 1 (at [22]) smoother.

A pizzicato passage in [11]-[12] leads into theme 3. Having played an accompanying role until now, the piano takes over the melody while the violin accompanies. The light, fleeting nature of this theme provides a contrast to the themes 1 and 2.

Up to this point, Rumanian, Ruthenian and Hungarian elements have been found. Now, Bartók draws on the folk music of Arabs from Biskra, in North Africa. He collected and transcribed sixty-five musical items from the Arab peasants in 1913, as we saw in the 'Historical Background'.⁴⁷ A parallel can be drawn between one of these transcriptions and theme 3 (the recording of this Arab piece is also available):

Ex.27: (a) "Tuggurt-i boka-d-len " for *rcheita* and *Tabbal* (drums) from Biskra, no.50 from Bartók's collection.

Hangsör

J. = 66

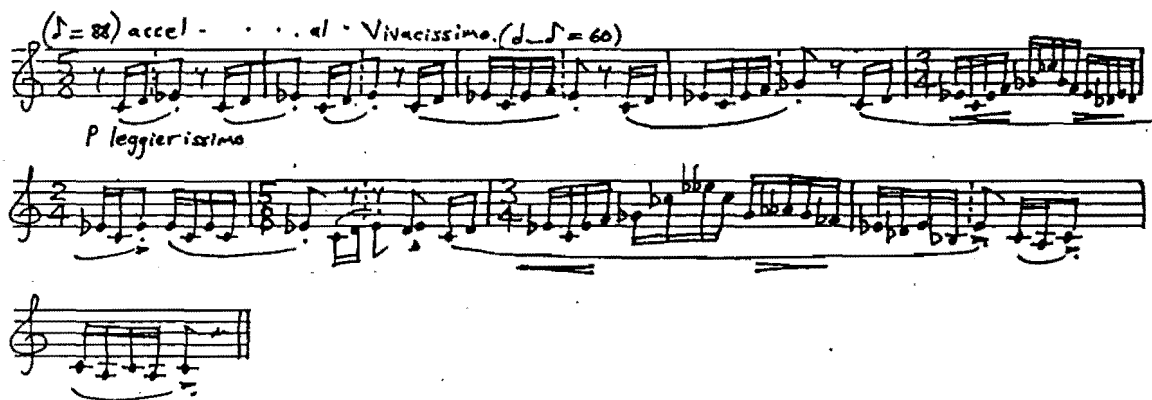
Tabbäl

periodus

szabálytalanul váltakozik ezzel:

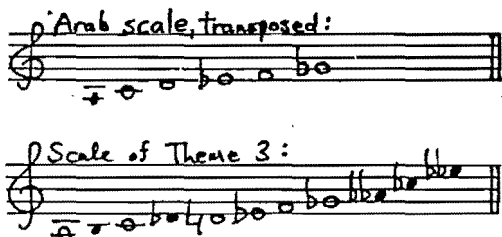
⁴⁷ The collection is included in the essay, "A Biskra Vidéki Arabok Népzeneje" [The Folk Music of the Arabs of Biskra and Environs], originally published in *Szimfónia*, No.12-13, 1917, pp.308-23.

(b) *VS1*, III, piano (simplified), theme 3, 12b.1-b.113.



The instrument playing the melody, the *rcheita*, is a little like a coarse-sounding oboe, with a harsh, nasal tone (refer to Tape Example 6 in ch.4). Prior to the melody, Bartók indicates the scale it is based on. The high E^b is to be questioned because in listening to the recording of this item it is my impression that E^{bb} is intended. This is important. If E^{bb} is indeed correct, the scale comes even closer to the one used in theme 3. Transposing the scale of the Arabic melody to C, we can see the the relationship more clearly:

Ex.28: Arabic scale from the item in Ex.27(a).



Apart from similarities of scale, there are melodic ideas in common and these are circled and marked in Ex.27a and 27b. Despite the rests in Bartók's melody, it has a *moto perpetuo* feel that is similar to the continuous movement of the Arabic piece. The tempi also are similar, with $\text{♩} = 60$ for Bartók's melody and $\text{♩} = 66$ for the Arabic melody.

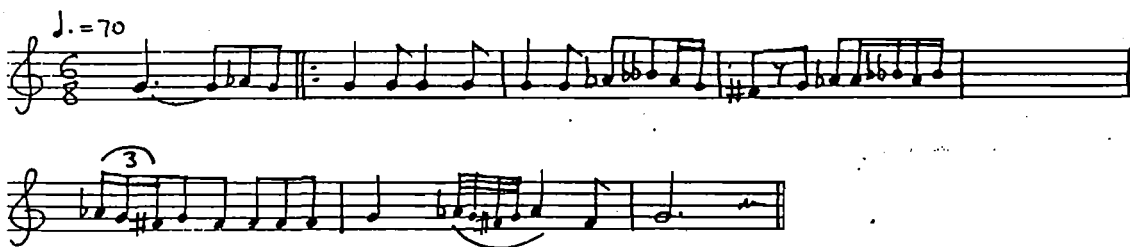
In [15]-[17], Bartók varies theme 3 by altering the intervals of the melodic line. This is the same device we encountered in the second movement of *Contrasts*, examined in Chapter 1:

Ex.29: *VS1*, III, piano (simplified) [15]-[17].



The intervals of the original scale pattern are generally made smaller, although the tritone at the end is an expansion of the minor third, C-A, in Ex.27b. Although this appears to be a compositional device, the new scale that results is more characteristically 'Arabic' than before. Narrow melodic ranges and chromatic or semi-chromatic scales were two notable features of the Arabic melodies Bartók collected, as can be seen in the following:⁴⁸

Ex.30: "Kneja-darz "Ahlilizam" for two voices and drums from Biskra, North Africa (first voice only); no.13 from Bartók's collection. (Accidentals are given throughout for emphasis; in Bartók's original transcription, he indicates the scale at the start and omits accidentals during the item, in the manner of a key signature.)



⁴⁸ The term 'chromatic' is used here in a general sense, without reference to western, 'classical' chromaticism. Each pitch of these Arabic scales is individual and not simply an altered version of another pitch. As Bartók writes, "...they are as much independent tones as are the single degrees of the diatonic scale, and they have no interrelation except their relation to the fundamental tone". BBE, "Harvard Lectures", III, p.377.

This item uses a scale similar to that in Ex.29. As in Bartók's melody, the tonic and the note a minor third above are the most prominent pitches.

In his 'Harvard lectures', Bartók stated that his first 'chromatic' melody was written in 1923 - the opening theme of the first movement of *Dance Suite*. He then continued, "This music has some resemblance to the Arab melody you just heard", but added that this type of melodic invention was not significant at that stage.⁴⁹ Since *VSI* was written two years earlier (1921), we cannot label melodies such as that quoted in Ex.29 as 'chromatic' in Bartók's terms; 'semi-chromatic' might be a better label to use. That he was using Arabic elements in his music before 1923 is indisputable. One proof of this is Bartók's own comment about a work he wrote in 1914: "The third movement of my suite (op.14) for piano, for example, has been influenced by Arab music of this kind".⁵⁰

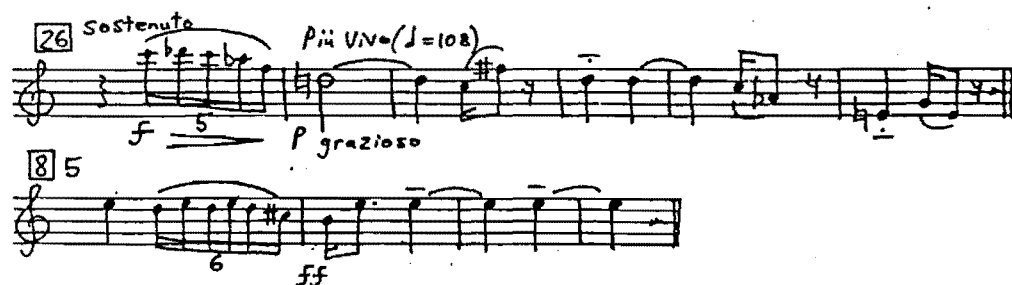
Themes 1, 2 and 3 provide the bulk of the melodic material in the finale, and the various folk features they contain are developed, to a greater or lesser extent, throughout the remainder of the movement. We have already discussed the other appearances of the rondo theme. All that remains to be studied is the recapitulation of themes 2 and 3, and the development section.

Following the second statement of the rondo theme, a passage using material derived from cadential figures in theme 1 acts as a link to the development section, which begins at [25] b.14. From this point through to [28] a four-part structure, ABAB, is formed. 'A' consists of a rhythmically augmented version of theme 1, while 'B' is a graceful but slightly playful idea (the violin is marked *grazioso* and the piano, *scherzando, leggiero*), related to theme 2 by the descending, quintuplet figure and dotted rhythm motives:

⁴⁹ *BBE*, p.379. It is not certain which Arabic melody Bartók quoted.

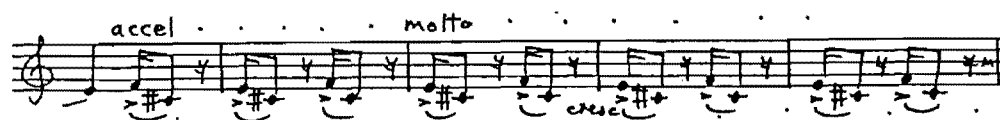
⁵⁰ See *BBE*, "The Folk Songs of Hungary" (1928), p.338.

Ex.31: *VS1*, III, violin, [26] bb.1-6 compared with [8] bb.5-8.



The dotted rhythms in theme 2 are the only direct folk elements that remain, although there are touches of modality on occasions ([26] bb.10-11 and [26] bb.12-13, for instance). At the beginning of the coda of the movement, the dotted rhythm-idea in [26] bb.6-7 is extended into a sort of 'stop-gap' motive:

Ex.32: *VS1*, III, violin, [45] bb.2-6.



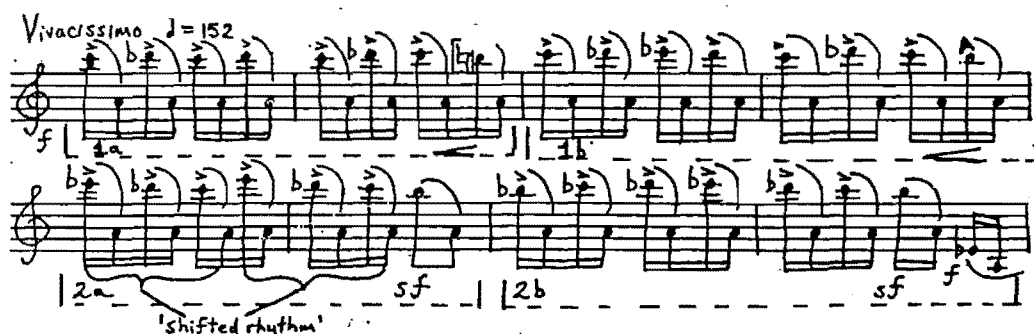
Section 'B' in the development is typical of some of the whimsical ideas which appear in Bartók's finales, from this time onward. More obvious examples occur in *String Quartet No.5* (movement 5, bb.699-720), and the *Divertimento* (movement 3, bb.510-32). The finale to the *PS* has a subtly ironic section (bb. 111-18) which is on a similar level of humour to that of section 'B' from the third movement of *VS1*. While adding a little light relief, this section may also be considered a parody of theme 2, Bartók's intention being to distance the piece from folk music influence.

The rest of the development ([28][33]) contains contrapuntal workings of ideas from both 'A' and 'B'. Once again, the only audible folk element still present is the dotted rhythms in the violin part. An abundance of trills and tremolos heighten the burlesque

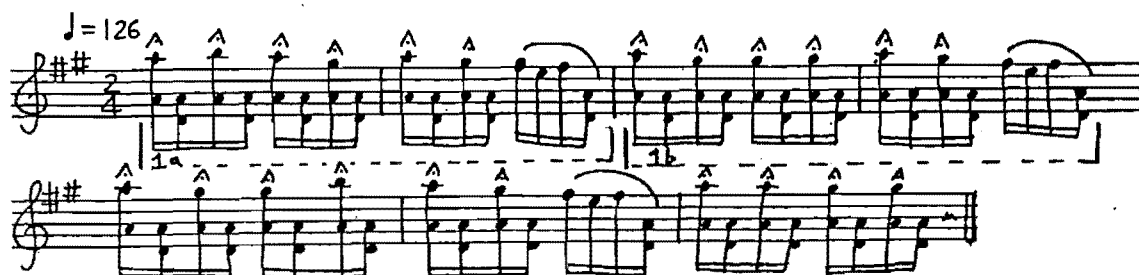
element in the development. This type of ornamentation is certainly not characteristic of folk music performance. There is an almost self-conscious artificiality about these contrapuntal workings that seems out of place in this movement.⁵¹

Following the recapitulation of theme 1 at [33], a short link passage (at [36]) using a motive from this theme leads into a new episode ([36]b.8-[37]b.5). In this episode, the violin part once again imitates an instrumental folk idiom. The instrument being imitated is actually the rural violin but as was the case in theme 2, this rural violin, itself, is mimicking the bagpipes. The similarities between the violin line in this episode and a violin melody Bartók collected in Satu-Mare, Rumania make this point clear:

Ex.33: (a) *VS I*, III, violin, [36]bb.8-15.



(b) Violin piece from Satu-Mare, Rumania; *RFM I*, no.662.

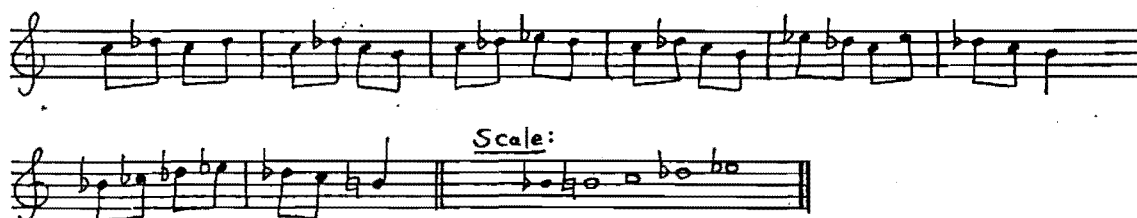


⁵¹ This is discussed further in ch. 7.

In both cases, the violin attempts to represent the drone of the bagpipe by persistent repetition of the lower open strings.⁵² Bartók's episode also includes an open-fifth drone in the piano part (F-C). In both cases, the violin 'picks out' the melody line on the upper string with every alternate note, imitating the staccato technique of the bagpipes described in Chapter 1.⁵³ As we can see in Ex.33(b), the folk piece belongs to the category of melodies in 'free form', based on motives. Likewise, Bartók's melody is motivic in character, lending itself to a motive-analysis. The wild, diabolical nature of this episode is appropriate considering the character of authentic bagpipe pieces.⁵⁴

Although Rumanian bagpipe/violin melodies in 'free form' are taken as the model for the melody in Ex.33(a), the actual melodic line uses a scale and range similar to those found in Arabic melodies. We can see this more clearly when we omit the notes played on open strings:

Ex.34: *VS1*, III, violin melody from Ex.33(a) without alternating open strings.



The scale used is semi-chromatic and narrow in range, like those in Ex.30. Therefore, it is possible that Arabic scalic characteristics have been combined with a Rumanian instrumental genre to produce another musical manifestation of Bartók's 'brotherhood of nations' ideal.

⁵² See pp.162-3.

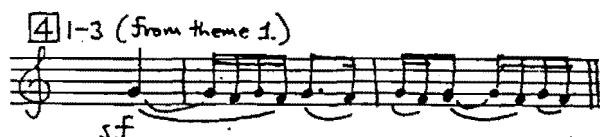
⁵³ See ch.1, pp.22-3.

⁵⁴ See ch.1, pp.97-8.

There is another 'stop-gap' motive in [37] bb.2-4 at the end of this episode, leading into the recapitulation of theme 2. Because of the insertion of the episode and the gathering momentum of the movement, theme 2 is considerably abridged and varied. It is, in fact, closer to the varied version of theme 2. As in the exposition, the varied version follows theme 3 and is itself varied in a quasi-improvisatory manner with the melodic motives being freely ordered (see [41] b.1- [44]).

Prior to the recapitulation of theme three, a second episode appears. It is based on the main motive of theme 1:

Ex.35: (a) *VSI*, III, violin motive from [4] bb.1-3.



(b) *VSI*, III, violin, b.2 [39] - [39] b.7 *ff*.

One senses that here again Bartók is imitating some folk music genre. Perhaps it is another bagpipe-imitation, with the droning open G-string and the rapid alternation of melody notes and open G. It is also possible that the music of the alphorn is being evoked. Bartók recorded a substantial number of alphorn melodies (played by shepherds), and discussed

them at length in his essay on folk instruments of Eastern Europe. He quotes the following melody, which shows a certain similarity to the melodic motif in Ex.35:⁵⁵

Ex.36: "Joc" for alphorn from Albac (Turda-Arieş), from Bartók's collection; see *BBE*, p.244, Ex.7.



The rapid alternation of high and low notes, as in Bartók's melody, is not untypical of alphorn music. Nos.767-76 in *RFM I* all contain this particular idiom. The imitation of alphorn music on other instruments, such as the violin, is another feature Bartók discovered.⁵⁶

As is the case with theme 2, theme 3 is recapitulated in a shortened, varied form. It covers just twelve bars (from [40] to [41]), compared with fifty-six bars in the exposition. The piano's melody now has no rests between phrases, adding to the *moto perpetua* character. Instead of accompanying with pizzicato chords, the violin has a melody of similar character to the piano, with a rhythmic canon between the two being set up. The violin's melody uses melodic motives from theme 1:

⁵⁵ See "The Folklore of Instruments and their Music in Eastern Europe", *BBE*, pp.241-4 (Ex.33 above appears as Ex.7 in the essay). For further description and examples of the alphorn, see *RFM I*, pp.23-5 and nos.764-809 (Ex.33 appears as no.791 in *RFM I*). Sárosi suggests that traces of "call melodies of the shepherds", played on horns or trumpets, are imitated in Bartók's (and Kodály's) music but does not specify where. See Sárosi's "Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály's Works. The Galánta and Marosszék Dances", *Studia Musicologica* v.25, 1983, p.25. Somfai identifies the trumpet theme from the *Concerto for Orchestra*, V (bb.201ff) as being a stylization of alphorn melodies. See Somfai "Analytical Notes", VII, "Themes with 'Long Notes' (Piano Concerto No.1, Third Movement)", *op. cit.*, p.37.

⁵⁶ See *RFM I*, Nos.807-9, containing two pieces for flute and two for violin.

Ex.37: VSI, III, violin, [40] bb.1-5.



The origin of this motive can be seen in Ex.14(b), where it has a cadential function. Therefore, from [36] to [44] melodic motives from theme 1 pervade the texture at the same time as themes 2 and 3 are recapitulated and two new episodes appear. On top of the ordinary closed structures of the sonata-rondo form, Bartók adds a 'free form' element through the improvisatory use of motives. In this way, he attempts to transform the thematic material in order to create a stronger impetus in this part of the movement. The manipulation of folk motives in the recapitulation is subject to further scrutiny in chapter 7, where the work is considered from a more abstract angle.

At b. 4 [44] another statement of the rondo theme is anticipated by the piano gesture, based on the opening of this theme. (This gesture occurs twice before, at b.7 [22] and 1 [33], where it is followed by the rondo theme.) However, what follows instead is a reminiscence of melody 'B' from the development, signifying the beginning of the coda.⁵⁷ Melody 'A' (the augmented version of theme 1) also returns, and when the *moto perpetua* violin line enters the character of the original rondo theme is restored.⁵⁸

The following diagram of the structure of this complex movement shows the various folk music influences:

⁵⁷ See p. 172 of the present chapter for further description of this thematic recurrence.

⁵⁸ See p. 160 of the present chapter for a description of the rest of the coda.

Diagram 2:

Exposition:

Rondo theme
(1st subject) b.1 - [8]

Rumanian,
In the style of Violin
playing from Maramures

2nd subject
[8] - [12]

Ruthenian-Hungarian
Bagpipe-imitation on
Violin

3rd subject
[12] - [18]

Arabic
Possibly imitation
of rchoita melody

2nd subject varied
[18] - b.7 [22]

Ruthenian-Rumanian
Bagpipe-imitation on
Violin.

Rondo theme
b.7 [22] - [25] b.14

Rumanian, as before
(Possibly reference to
Arabic folk music -
see ch.7)

Development:

A B A B [25] b.14 - [28]

A = Augmented version of Rondo theme

B = Varied version of 2nd Subject
(Grazioso theme)

Contrapuntal development,
etc...
[28] - [33]

Recapitulation:

Rondo theme
[33] - [36] b.7

Rumanian,
as before.

Episode
[36] b.7 - 4 [38]

Rumanian
+ Arabic,
Bagpipe-imitation
on violin

2nd subject
4 [38] - 2 [39]

Ruthenian,
as before
(shortened)

Episode
2 [39] - [40]

Possibly Rumanian,
Possibly imitation
of Alphorn.

3rd subject varied
[40] - [41]

Combination of
motives from
1st and 3rd subjects

2nd subject varied
[41] - [44]

Ruthenian-Rumanian,
as before

Coda [44] - end

Grazioso theme,
Augmented theme,
Rondo theme.

In *PS*, III, we saw how different instrumental folk music genres were imitated and employed as variations on the quasi-folk song from Hungary. While folk song was the essential basis for the direct folk influence in this case, in the finale of *VSI* the various instrumental folk music styles imitated are independent of folk song (although strophic structure are used). They also come from different countries: Hungary, Rumania, Ruthenia and North Africa. The basic genre of these instrumental imitations is dance music; here, Bartók's finales have many older precedents. Bartók, himself, points out that the last movements of Viennese 'Classics' by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven on occasion imitate or use Slavonic instrumental peasant music. He draws direct parallels between Yugoslav folk

tunes and the main themes of Haydn's *Symphony No.104*, IV, and Beethoven's *Symphony No.6*, V.⁵⁹ In addition to the concept of a finale of dances, the musical portrayal of people from several nations making music together is Bartók's solution to the tensions and problems posed in the earlier movements. Therefore, it may be said that folk music not only influenced Bartók's melodic and rhythmic world but it also helped him to arrive at an overall concept of the form of the work.⁶⁰ Whether or not this conceptual solution succeeds from the musical point of view is a question that is dealt with in Chapter 7.

PIANO SONATA: MOVEMENT ONE, THEME ONE

The opening theme of the *PS* (bb.1-43) is suggestive of some type of folk music influence but it is not possible, however, to identify a specific genre or even nationality although certain features strongly link it to Hungarian or Rumanian folk music. Damiana Bratuz states that it is the "Bagpipes, drums and pipes" which are being imitated.⁶¹ This would seem a reasonable assumption, considering the similarity between this theme and the first movement of the *Out of Doors* suite, entitled "With Drums and Pipes".⁶² However, there is no evidence of direct reference to bagpipe or drum playing in either of these pieces. In the opening of the sonata, the static harmonies might suggest the imitation of the bagpipe's drone. The motivic melodic line might be heard as an imitation of 'free form', instrumental music (the type we encountered in *VSI*) which originated in bagpipe music. These 'imitations' are not direct; perhaps they were not ever intended to be imitations. (The

⁵⁹ BBE, "The Relation of Folk Song to the Development of the Art Music of our Time", pp.326-8, Exs. 1-3.

⁶⁰ See ch.9 for further discussion.

⁶¹ Damiana Bratuz, *The Folk Element in the Piano Music of Béla Bartók*, Ph.D. diss., (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1965), p.166.

⁶² This work, for piano solo, was written in 1926, at approximately the same time as the *PS*.

nature of the melodic line is discussed below.) Imitation of peasant drumming (from Balkan countries, at least) also seems unlikely, despite the percussive quality of theme 1. Apart from Arab music, Bartók very rarely recorded folk music involving percussion instruments.⁶³ The motor-rhythmic nature of this theme is more likely to have been inspired by an example from contemporary Western music, some of Stravinsky's works, for instance. Somfai suggests the piece, "With Pipes and Drums", may have been inspired by some non-folk music genre, in the same way that the piano piece, "Tambourine", mimics the sounds and rhythms of some anonymous drummer.⁶⁴ Perhaps Bartók had something similar in mind when writing the opening of the sonata. Again, it is important to avoid attributing characteristics in the music to folk music influences without firm proof of a connection.

Having said this, there are direct folk elements present in theme 1, even if a specific genre is missing. In bb.2-6, the accents marked off the beat remind us of rural violin performance Bartók found in Rumania.⁶⁵ There is no indication (such as *sempre simile*) that these accents continue but it seems logical from a musical point of view that they should, at least until b.36.⁶⁶ The melodic line, which is built up in motivic-like phrases, does have certain qualities in common with Eastern European instrumental folk melody, especially in terms of modality:

⁶³ An instance involving the instrument, the *gardon*, was discussed on p.143 of this chapter. Also see *RFM I*, p.26-7.

⁶⁴ "Tambourine" is the eighth piece of the set, *Nine Little Piano Pieces*, also written at the same time as *PS*. See Somfai's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Piano Music 8*. In conversation with Somfai, he made an analogy with "The Royal March" from Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1918) which was inspired by the sounds of bands parading through the streets in Spain. Somfai also suggests that "Tambourine" may have been inspired by Couperin's genre piece for Clavecin, "*Les Tambourins*", which Bartók edited along with other pieces by the French composer. See Somfai, "Analytical Notes", *op. cit.*, p.21 and p.27.

⁶⁵ See p.168 of the present chapter.

⁶⁶ The off-beat accents are maintained in the recent Hungarian recording of *PS*, performed by Erzsébet Tusa, on *Bartók Béla Piano Music 8*.

Ex.38: *PS*, I, theme 1, melody line only.

bb. 14-18
sf
segment of E dorian/aeolian

bb. 31-33
ff
segment of C dorian/aeolian

The types of melodic motives developed here are shorter and more fragmented than authentic folk motives. The way the motives are varied is also more deliberate than would be the case in a folk piece although the illusion of improvisation is maintained by the seemingly random rhythmic patterns. Bartók uses the 'shifted rhythm' technique he learned from folk music, but again the effect is exaggerated; it is used on a smaller, more intricate scale than would be found in folk music.⁶⁷ There are also other, non-folk rhythmic devices employed here, most notably the regulated reduction of the 8-semiquaver group to a 2-semiquaver group:

Ex.39: *PS*, I, Rhythm of melody line, bb.20-35.

(R.H.)
sf

(L.H.) (rhythm only)
etc. simile

c c c c 8 → sf

6 → 4 → 3 → 2
sf sf

⁶⁷ See section 2 of Appendix 1 in *RFM I*, where Bartók has an ordered list of folk motives in 'shifted rhythm'. Somfai's analysis of this theme probes deeper into Bartók's polyrhythmic scheme, revealing cycles of 3-semiquaver groups against the repeated groups of four quavers per bar. This polyrhythmic aspect lies below the aural surface of the music which is dominated by the 'shifted rhythm' effect (followed by the 'reduction' effect). See Somfai "Analytical Notes", *op. cit.*, pp.32-3.

Bartók's method of melodic variation can be compared with the examples from instrumental folk music (based on the free use of motives), thus illustrating the points made above. As we can see from Ex.40, the folk motives are bigger than Bartók's melodic fragments. This applies to any folk motives he analysed, the smallest of which lasts two bars (in 2/4 meter).⁶⁸

Ex.40: Violin piece from Satu-Mare; *RFM 1*, no.654.



The folk piece contains six different motives (plus variants). Although they have a certain similarity to each other, there is none of the deliberate melodic development found in Bartók's theme. Rhythmically, the folk piece is quite varied and complex but not nearly as sophisticated as the theme. This is partly because the violinist has to maintain a steady, regular pulse (for purposes of dancing) while Bartók's melody is free to wander away from the beat which is kept by the left hand chords. Likewise, Bartók's melody has plenty of

⁶⁸ Again, see Appendix I in *RFM 1*, which lists the various melodic motives found in the instrumental pieces of indeterminate form (Class B).

rests while the folk piece has none, the violinist having to sustain the dance with a continuous stream of melody.

It is, perhaps, the bald, astringent texture of this opening theme which makes us associate it with some primitive form of music. The persistence of the dynamic level (*fortissimo*) and the relentless rhythmic drive are highly characteristic of the instrumental dance music Bartók collected. As we saw in the 'Historical Background', at the time of writing this sonata the composer was conscious of developing what he called a 'bone and muscle' style of piano music, a style free from superfluous ornaments and Romantic gestures. 'Bone and muscle' is an apt description of the theme we have just discussed. Even if this style is only indirectly related to Bartók's folk music experience, we can feel something of the tough earthiness of folk music coming through.⁶⁹

Melodic ideas from theme 1 pervade the rest of the movement. In the recapitulation, the melodic motives are further varied, the rhythm becoming even more irregular than in Ex.39 (see bb.187-210).

CONTRASTS: MOVEMENT 3 ("SEBES")

In Chapter 1, we saw how the middle section of the third movement of *Contrasts* featured a folk song imitation. Flanking this middle section are two contrasting sections which are related to each other, creating a simple ternary form. These outer sections evoke the instrumental dance music of the Rumanian peasants. This, along with the quasi-Hungarian/Bulgarian melody in the middle section, makes this movement another poly-national affair in accordance with Bartók's 'brotherhood of nations' ideal.

⁶⁹ In ch.4, an attempt is made to more firmly establish a connection between the 'bone and muscle' tone of many of Bartók's works (including the works under study) and his experience of the peasant's 'sound-world'.

The third movement begins with open strings being played on a mistuned violin, the E-string tuned to E^b, and the G-string tuned to G[#]:

Ex.41: *Contrasts*, III, violin, bb.1-10ff.



Many of the violinists Bartók recorded had instruments tuned to pitches other than the normal G-D-A-E. In *RFM I*, Bartók indicates before an item if the tuning is abnormal - see nos.652, 653, and 654, for instance, where the violin is tuned to the pitches E-B-F[#]-C[#](working upwards). There are no examples of strings tuned to intervals other than perfect fifths, however.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the intonation of these fifths was rarely precise and we could view Bartók's scordatura effect as a wry comment upon this fact. As well as being a special effect, the diminished fifths are integrated into the melodic and harmonic context, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

Another feature of rural violin performance for dance music to be seen in Ex.41 is the off-beat accents which continue until b.30. This has already been remarked upon in both *VSI* and the *PS*. While the violin's ostinato continues, the first melody is announced on the clarinet. It consists of a repeated two-bar phrase (with a different ending), four bars in total, plus a varied version of these four bars, immediately following:

⁷⁰ The exception is the flat-bridged violins from Mureş, which accompany normally-tuned instruments. They are tuned, thus:



See *RFM I*, p.16.

Ex.42: *Contrasts*, III, clarinet, theme 1, bb.10-18.



The basic two-bar phrase is comparable to the two-bar motives which are to be found in Rumanian instrumental pieces in 'free form' (such as those quoted in Ex.40). Ex.42 is analysed according to the division into such motives.⁷¹ The actual pitch content of Bartók's 'motives' is not similar to folk models; the following motive from *RFM 1* is the closest example the author could find:

Ex.43: Melodic motive from a Rumanian instrumental piece, no.674a,b from *RFM 1* (also see Appendix 1, no.52).



Downey suggests piece no.174e (the varied version) from *RFM 5* as a possible model for Bartók's melody.⁷² Such specific analogies do not seem justified, however, especially at this late stage in Bartók's career when the folk influence had become thoroughly absorbed into his style. The prominence of the interval of a fourth in Bartók's melody is a fingerprint of his folk-based style. This interval provides an harmonic framework (based on A-D/E^b-A^b) which typically avoids the traditional tonic-dominant relationship.

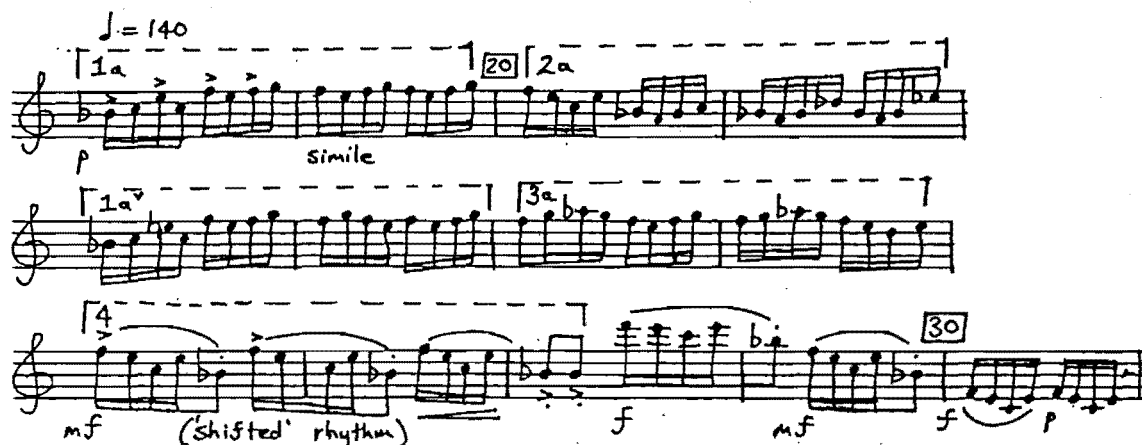
The varied version of the melody in Ex.42 assumes a *moto perpetua* character which associates it with some types of instrumental dance music, as we saw earlier in the chapter. A stronger association with this genre is made in theme 2 however, which

⁷¹ The 'squareness' of the phrasing in this melody may result from the incorporation of elements from the fast *verbunkos* style, or *csárdás*. See ch.3, p.219.

⁷² John W. Downey *La Musique Populaire dans l'oeuvre de Béla Bartók*, Ph.d diss. (University of Paris, 1956), p.419.

follows theme 1 immediately. If theme 1 has a somewhat hidden folk character then theme 2 is more directly influenced:

Ex.44: *Contrasts*, III, piano, theme 2, bb.18-30 (left hand only).



The basic scale employed here is the first mode of the *heptatonia secunda*, or the 'acoustic' scale which was discussed in the 'Review of Literature'. This scale is coloured by occurrences of flattened second, third and fourth degrees. The analysis by motive-structure is more appropriate in this melody because of its freer form and considerable length. The motives themselves have several parallels in instrumental folk pieces in 'free form':

Ex.45: Violin piece from Satu-Mare, Rumania; *RFM I*, no.654 (see Ex.41).



Such similar motives appear in nos.670, 656, 645 and many other pieces in *RFM I*, and their connection with the motives in Ex.44 is obvious. The *tempi*, too, are alike. The first

one. The parallel to this in folk music is the 'stop-gap' motive which is used by bagpipers to fill in time while they tune the instrument.⁷⁴

Two other full (and varied) appearances of theme 2 occur at climactic points in the movement, in bb.103-11 and 248-65. There is a particularly folk-like quality about these passages. Apart from the simple accompaniment (bb.103-11 feature static pentatonic chords on the piano) and the freely motivic nature of the melodic lines, it is the loud dynamic marking and the presence of the violin that really brings it closer to the 'sound-world' of folk music. The following example shows Bartók's folk-motive analysis technique applied to both passages mentioned above:

Ex.48: (a) *Contrasts*, III, full score with motive-analysis, bb.103-12.

Un poco più mosso, $\text{♩} = 150$

The musical score for Ex.48: (a) *Contrasts*, III, full score with motive-analysis, bb.103-12. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Clarinet (Clar.), and Piano (P.F.). It shows the first system (bb. 103-11) and the second system (bb. 110-112). The first system includes measures 1, 2a (extended), and 2b. The second system includes measures 2d, 2f, 2g, and 2h. The score is annotated with 'S.R.' (Soprano Register) and 'f' (forte) dynamics. The tempo is 'Un poco più mosso' and the time signature is 3/4.

⁷⁴ See p.156 of the present chapter.

(b) *Contrasts*, III, full score with motive-analysis, bb.248-68.

1 Più mosso, $\text{♩} = 150$ 2a. 2b.

250

2c 3a 3a

2c 3b 3b

250 2d 2e

250 2f

allarg. . . . a tempo

allarg. . . . a tempo

B. & H. 18756

Instances of 'shifted rhythm' in Ex.48 are marked 'S.R.' The increase in tempo which occurs at the beginning of these passages heightens the climactic effect and adds to the intoxicated, dance-like atmosphere.

The prominence given to these especially folk-like moments is quite deliberate. It even happens in Bartók's more abstract works such as *String Quartet No.3*, at the end of the *prima parte* where the complex, chromatic texture makes way for a simple, folk-like melody (see [11] bb.4-12ff). The 'culmination points' which Somfai discusses are other examples of Bartók reserving a special place in a work for more directly folk-inspired passages.⁷⁵

The character of these three appearances of theme 2 is similar to that of theme 1 from the finale to *VSI* (discussed earlier in the chapter). There are melodic motives in the *Contrasts* theme which bear a striking resemblance to those in *VSI*, as we can see by comparing the opening two bars of Ex.44 with the following:⁷⁶

Ex.49: *VSI*, III, violin, [46] bb.5-9



Weissman also noticed such relationships between these (and other) pieces, describing as "amazing" the "unconscious remembrance" of Bartók in using similar ideas in works written seventeen years apart.⁷⁷ However, when we realize that these ideas have precedents in folk music and when we consider that after years of collecting and many hours spent

⁷⁵ See Somfai "A Characteristic Culmination Point in Bartók's Instrumental Forms", in *International Musicological Conference in Commemoration of Béla Bartók 1971*, pp.53-64. Also see ch.1, pp.103-4

⁷⁶ Also compare the motive in Ex.45 with similar motives in *VSI*, finale, b.19 4 - 21 b.11.

⁷⁷ John S. Weissman "Béla Bartók: An Estimate", *Music Review* v.7, 1946, p.240.

analysing and ordering his folk music items, Bartók is bound to have had hundreds of melodies and motives firmly ingrained in his memory, it should come as no surprise if some of these melodies appear in similar form in several of his compositions written after 1910. There are also similarities in the melodic material between these two works and the two violin rhapsodies of 1928. (A parallel between *VSI* and *Rhapsody No.2* appears on p.161 of the present chapter.) As we shall see in Chapter 3, there are several common links between *Contrasts* and the *Rhapsodies*.

Themes 1 and 2 provide most of the melodic material in this movement (excluding the middle section). As was stated earlier, the 'head'-motive of theme 2 becomes very prominent in the recapitulation, while theme 1 reappears only twice (in bb.230-40). For the purpose of discovering how Bartók manipulates his thematic material, the following chart traces the various developments:

Ex.50: *Contrasts*, III, Chart of melodic material derived from themes 1 and 2.

(THEME 1)

Handwritten musical notation for Theme 1, consisting of four staves. Staff 1 (labeled '1.') shows measures 35-37 for Violin (Vln.). Staff 2 (labeled '2.') shows measures 57-61 for Clarinet (Clar.). Staff 3 (labeled '3.') shows measures 230-233. Staff 4 (labeled '4.') shows measures 234-237 for Violin (Vln.), with a handwritten note '(+ Varied "answering" phrase)' and a triplet of Clarinet (Clar.) notes below. The notation includes various accidentals and melodic lines.

(THEME 2)

bb.65-71

Handwritten musical notation for Theme 2, consisting of three staves. Staff 1 (labeled '1.') shows measures 65-71 for Violin (Vln.). Staff 2 (labeled '2.') shows measures 89-92 for Piano (Piano), with handwritten notes '(Clar. + Vln.)' and '(+ varied second version)' above. Staff 3 (labeled '3.') shows measures 94-98 for Violin (Vln.), with a handwritten note '(Clar.)' below. The notation includes various accidentals and melodic lines.

bb.103-105 (Second Main Appearance)

4. (Vln.) (octave higher)

bb.169-170 (Piano) (Violin Cadenza!)

6. bb.186 ff *ostinati* (or "stop-gap" motif) (Clar.)

7. (Cadenza) Pizz. (Cadenza)

8. 9.


10. (Cadenza)

bb.248-251 (Third Main Appearance)

11. (Vln., octave higher)

bb.292-295 [spaced in sixths]

12.

As can be seen, the 'head'-motive of theme 2 becomes the dominant melodic motive, especially in the third section (from bb.169 onwards). Theme 1 plays a relatively small role after the first section; its 'head'-motive is identical in rhythm to that of theme 2 and consequently it becomes redundant in the later motivic developments.⁷⁸ The rhythm, , from the third thematic 'development' is quite characteristic in Rumanian instrumental folk music.⁷⁹

Ex.51: Melodic motives from Rumanian instrumental folk music.

$\text{♩} = 160$

Lampert 136

RFM 1, no. 617



⁷⁸ For further discussion on the motivic development in this movement, see ch.6, pp.427-8.

⁷⁹ See also Ex.25 from the present chapter, a bagpipe piece from Bihor, Rumania.

The first of these motives is similar to an idea Bartók develops later in the movement:

Ex.52: *Contrasts*, III, Clarinet, bb.222-3.



Also noteworthy in Ex.50 is the use of the 'head'-motive as a sort of 'stop-gap' motive (or ostinato) in bb.186-211, continuing into the violin cadenza as well, where it appears in consecutive fifths (see no. 8 in Ex.49). The fifths may be a reference to an accidental feature of rural violin performance which Bartók explains thus: "...it may even happen that they play portions of the piece in consecutive fifths, stopping two adjacent chords with their finger and striking both unintentionally with the bow".⁸⁰

Apart from these points, and the aforementioned appearances of theme 2, Bartók's method of melodic manipulation is his own. The principle of variation is something he partly learned from folk music, but in general, he does not use actual folk variation procedures. For instance, the chromatic narrowing of themes 1 and 2 in bb.59-61 and the cadenza, respectively, (see Ex.50) is an abstract device of Bartók's which we have observed on two previous occasions.⁸¹

In bb.52-8, theme 3 is introduced. It provides a contrast to the previous two themes with its angular line (it is based on the leap of a m.7) and jocular mood. In the first section, this theme appears only briefly before material from theme 1 returns (in b.59). It has no links with folk music, aside from the piano accompaniment which maintains the off-beat accents (mixed with some accents on the beat) heard in themes 1 and 2. In the recapitulation, theme 3 becomes considerably more prominent and its jocular mood is enhanced by references to jazz. Bearing in mind that *Contrasts* was written for the famous jazz-clarinetist, Benny Goodman, it would be reasonable to expect such references. When

⁸⁰ *RFM I*, P.17.

⁸¹ See ch.1, *Contrasts*, II and the present chapter, *VSI*, III.

reviewing *Contrasts*, Goodman wrote, "I think it's interesting to note that Bartók derived his inspiration to write *Contrasts* from listening to a number of records made by my old Jazz Trio, consisting of Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa and myself."⁸² The implication here, that Bartók's sole inspiration for *Contrasts* was jazz-based is exaggerated, as the recapitulation of theme 3 is the only really jazz-like part of the entire work. Aside from Goodman's records, Bartók's experience of jazz was not substantial.⁸³ In the following extract, we can see the type of jazz-elements Bartók used: the high, 'squeaky' notes of the clarinet and the continuous 'om-pah' bass provided by the piano. (Further analysis of possible jazz-influence is given in ch. 6):

Ex.53: *Contrasts*, III, clarinet and piano, bb.200-5.



The 'squeaky-note' motive returns in the coda, taking over in extreme fashion, from the 'head'-motive. (bb.300-end). Somfai cites this passage as a possible example of the type of "ironical-grotesque penultimate episodes" found in several of Bartók's finales. The 'culmination point' in the movement is reached through the use of "ideas of purely musical

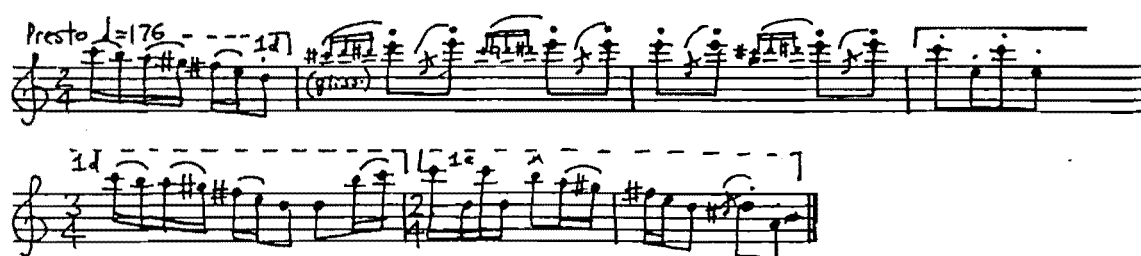
⁸² From an article by Goodman in *Listen*, November, 1940.

⁸³ See *BBE*, "Gipsy Music or Hungarian Music", p.207, for a passing mention of jazz made by Bartók in 1931. He came into direct contact with jazz during a concert tour of the U.S.A., in 1928 - see Hamish Milne, *Bartók: His Life and Times* (U.S.A: Hippocrene Books Inc., 1982), pp. 72-3. No. 148 from *Mikrokosmos* (the first of the six pieces in Bulgarian rhythm) also contains elements of jazz, imitating Gershwin's style (see ch.6).

inspiration", such as the 'jazzy' squeaks in *Contrasts*, rather than through a reference to folk music, such as we saw in the finale of *PS*.⁸⁴

It is important to uncover influences in Bartók's music from sources other than folk music. By doing so, we avoid the risk of 'finding' folk influences where they do not exist. Downey draws a parallel between theme 3 and the following extract from a violin melody, collected in Maramureş:⁸⁵

Ex.53: "Jocul barbatesc" for violin from Maramureş, Rumania; *RFM* 5, no.148b.



Features in common are the repeated-note idea and possibly the leaping figure, as well. There are two reasons why such a parallel is unjustified: first, the extract above represents only five bars in the middle of a fifty bar piece, the repeated-note idea occurring just once. The repeated-note idea is not part of the motive structure in Bartók's analysis, as can be seen in Ex.53; therefore, it is an unessential idea, added by the performer for show and, as such, is most unlikely to have impressed Bartók. Second, Bartók had a generally low opinion of

⁸⁴ See Somfai "Per Finire": Some Aspects of Bartók's Cyclic Form", *Studia Musicologica* v.11, 1969, pp.401-2, n42.

⁸⁵ John Downey, *op. cit.*, p.421 (ex.374).

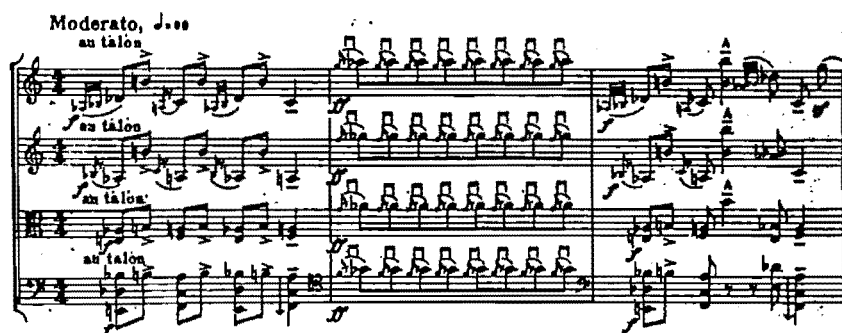
the instrumental performance practice in Marmureș, although he appears to have modified his views later in life.⁸⁶ To quote the composer (from 1913):⁸⁷

The gypsy, however, plays now for the dances of the peasants and now for the gentlemen; he intrudes his own inconstant temperament everywhere, imports all kinds of foreign music, fuses all these elements, adorning them with flourishes learned from cultivated West European society and plays, finally, dance music in which even the connoisseur of folk music finds it difficult to untangle the strands.

The folk piece Downey quotes is no exception to the type distorted by the gipsy performance. Effects such as glissandi and harmonics, are almost certainly "foreign" elements. It is difficult to imagine a 'purist' like Bartók being influenced by such an idea, even for humorous reasons.

Instead, theme 3 seems much more typical of the whimsical, playful ideas which frequently occur in Bartók's finales (after 1920). We have seen one in the finale of *VS1*, earlier in the present chapter (p.172). Bartók uses a similar 'squeaky-note' motive in the "Burletta" from *String Quartet No.6*, where it becomes even more grotesque than in *Contrasts*.⁸⁸

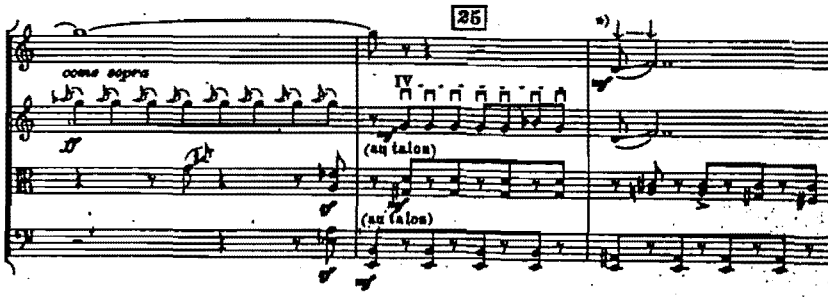
Ex.54: *String Quartet No.6*, "Burletta", bb.4[25]-[25]2



⁸⁶ See Bartók's essay "Gipsy Music or Hungarian Music?", *BBE*, p.222, where he says gipsy violin performance in the isolated rural areas is close to a genuine peasant style. He even cites Marmureș as one such area! See p.247, quotation.

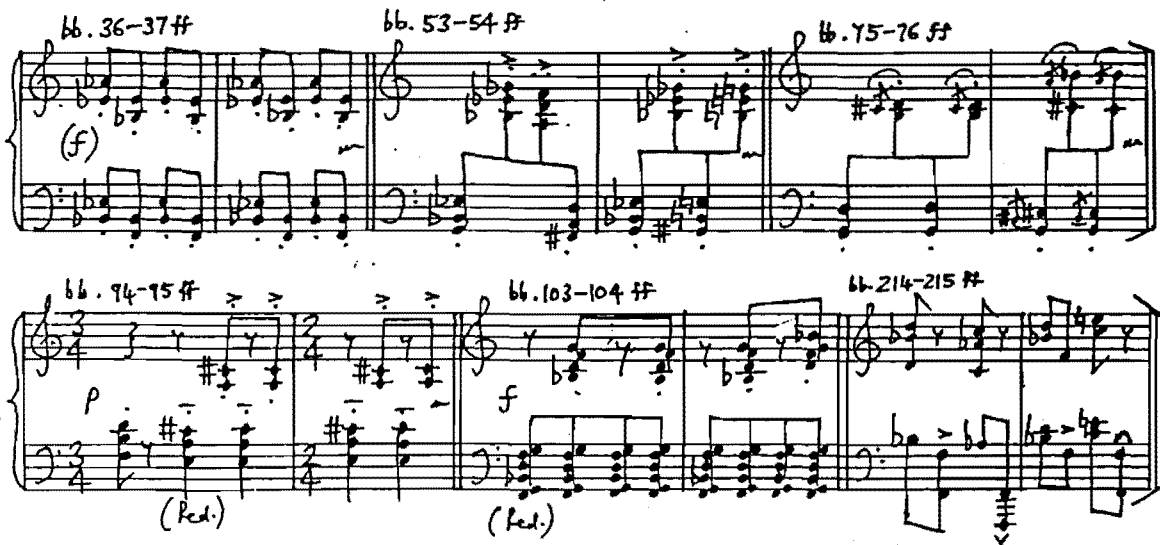
⁸⁷ *RFM* 5, p.28.

⁸⁸ This movement supposedly parodies Igor Stravinsky's style. Griffiths speaks of "...dry discords and marginal playing techniques in a manner suggestive of Stravinsky's quartet pieces..."-see his *Béla Bartók* (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1984), p.170. The same repeated-note motive also plays an important role in the finale to *Concerto for Orchestra*.



The role of the piano in the finale to *Contrasts* is designed to accompany the quasi-peasant dance music. Apart from rare melodic passages (such as bb.18-30), it provides a simple but vital rhythmic and harmonic background to the motivic interplay of the violin and clarinet. Accompaniment figures such as the following are similar to the types of accompaniment figures Bartók uses in arrangements of authentic folk music, such as the fast section from *Rumanian Folk Dances*:

Ex.55: *Contrasts*, III, piano accompaniment figurations.



The intention of the simple accompaniment figures in the *Rumanian Folk Dances* is to allow the "precious stone",⁸⁹ the folk melody, to shine through the texture unimpeded. Although

⁸⁹ See the quotation from earlier in the chapter, on p.148.

there is no authentic folk music in *Contrasts*, the accompaniment figures allow whatever quasi-folk elements are present to emerge more clearly.

Comparing the finales of *Contrasts* and *VS1*, we can see the change in the type of direct folk music influence present in Bartók's style over the seventeen years that separate the two works. Much of the melodic material in the finale to *VS1* is close in genre to authentic instrumental models. The finale to *Contrasts* shows a more thorough absorption of folk music, the melodic ideas, for the main part, being personally initiated by Bartók rather than consciously inspired by specific genres. However, he is unafraid of emphasizing folk-like passages in this movement, heightening the direct association with folk music. The types of instrumental folk motives which it shares with the finale to *VS1* show that the gap of seventeen years has not dulled Bartók's memory of specific folk music features. As we shall see in the next chapter, his original conception of *Contrasts* affected the degree of direct folk music influence in the music. In the context of other original compositions written around the time of *Contrasts* - *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, the *Violin Concerto No.2*, *Divertimento* and *String Quartet No.6* - this work seems more directly affected by folk music.⁹⁰

It is notable that *VS1* contains imitations of instrumental folk genres only. Although strophic forms are discernible in themes from the second and third movements, nowhere is folk song directly evoked in the music. In this way, *VS1* stands apart from *PS* and *Contrasts*, both which contain several folk song imitations. Is there a particular reason for this state of affairs? It cannot be argued that Bartók's musical language in *VS1* was too far removed from folk song for the latter to be integrated into the work. In the work previous to *VS1*, *Improvisations* for piano (1920), Bartók had shown his willingness to combine authentic folk song with his daring and experimental style of that time. Perhaps the answer has something to do with the medium of the work. The violin has the predominant melodic role, the melodic lines are very idiomatic for the violin and, therefore, any folk imitations are more likely to be instrumental in nature rather than vocal. However, in

⁹⁰ *Contrasts* might be seen as standing in relation to these contemporary works in the same way the violin rhapsodies compare with *String Quartets Nos.3* and *4*.

Contrasts the violin is given quasi-folk songs to play on more than one occasion. It is more likely that Bartók simply wished to write a finale to *VSI* based on different instrumental genres that depicted rural dance, and that in the first and second movements he felt no desire to use a quasi-folk song because of their personal, 'expressionist' mood. He could have imitated a dance song, as he did in the finale of *PS*, but was inspired instead by instrumental folk sources at the time. This was, in fact, the first occasion he based the themes of a major movement solely on the imitation of instrumental folk music.

Whatever the differences or similarities in content, the finales to *Contrasts* and *VSI* fulfil the same purpose; that of providing a triumphant, life-asserting statement that symbolically unites various nations through allusions to their folk music.

CHAPTER 3

THE *VERBUNKOS* IDIOM IN CONTRASTS

The *verbunkos* idiom comes from an Hungarian, urban music tradition. However, it also has roots in genuine Hungarian folk music. The reason for devoting a separate chapter on the *verbunkos* lies in the difficulty for non-Hungarians to determine what is and what is not derived from folk music sources. What follows is a general description of the *verbunkos*, Bartók's relationship with it and the role it plays in *Contrasts*.

Prior to the discovery of Hungarian peasant music by Bartók, Kodály and others, the *verbunkos*, in its mature form as art music, was accepted as authentic Hungarian folk music. The word '*verbunkos*' means recruiting music and, as this suggests, the music was originally played to help lure people into the army. Recruiting for the Austro-Hungarian army began about 1760. As to the sources of the *verbunkos*, Szabolcsi writes:¹

The "verbunkos" sources, not yet completely known, include some of the traditions of the old Hungarian popular music (Heyduck dance, Swine-herd dance), certain Levantine, Balkan and Slav elements, probably through the intermediation of the Gipsies, and also elements of the Viennese-Italian music, coming, no doubt, from the first cultivators of the "verbunkos", the urban musicians of German culture. A few early "verbunkos" publications and the peculiar melodic patterns found in the instrumental music of all people in the Danube valley, show clearly that the new style owed its unexpected appearance to some older popular tradition.

The *verbunkos* became a musical symbol of nationalism, particularly in the nineteenth century when there was growing resistance to the foreign rule of the Hapsburgs. Its musical characteristics became well known throughout Hungary and its influence spread further afield. Elements of its style can be detected in passages in works by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and later, Liszt and Brahms (among others). In 1859, Liszt wrote *Des*

¹ Bence Szabolcsi *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, 2d. ed. (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974), p.54.

Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie,² in which he mistakenly claimed the gipsy musicians were the true originators of Hungarian music (that is, the *verbunkos*), creating a controversy in Hungarian music circles.³ Liszt evidently heard genuine folk music but dismissed it as insignificant alongside the music performed by the urban gipsies. In the hands of skilled gipsy performers the *verbunkos* flourished, regardless of whether or not the tunes were peasant in origin or the products of amateur song writers. In the nineteenth century, therefore, Hungarian music was identified with the *verbunkos*.

What were (and, indeed, still are) the musical characteristics of the *verbunkos*? Once again, Szabolcsi can be of assistance:⁴

It [the *verbunkos*] was very easy to recognise because it very soon developed a complete set of characteristic elements, the cadence-pattern called "bokázó" ("clicking of heels", a type of medieval "cambiata"), the "Gipsy" or "Hungarian scale" using the interval of the augmented second, girlands of triplets, alternate "slow" and "fresh"[fast] tempi, widely arched, free melodies without words ("hallgató") and fiery ("cifra") rhythm- all these were signs of an early matured style. This style- instrumental flexibility, a Western ability of form-building, sharply divided but widely arched melodic patterns, a striking and extensive set of rhythms - raised the new Hungarian music above other Hungarian stylistic tendencies⁵.

The following musical example demonstrates these characteristics:⁶

² Published in Paris, 1859.

³ For a complete account of "The Liszt Controversy" see Sárosi's *Gypsy Music* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1970), pp.141-50.

⁴ Also see Kodály's description of "popular art-song" in Hungary, as opposed to the "Old song-tradition", in *Folk Music of Hungary*, pp.14-15.

⁵ Bence Szabolcsi, *op. cit.*, p.56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.164-6.

Ex.1: Ignac Ruzitaska, *Farewell and Quick Magyar* (1832)

Slow Magyar

f *rit.*

TRIO

amabile

p

Quick Magyar



The role of the gipsies in interpreting the *verbunkos* was very important. As Bálint Sárosi says "Its [the *verbunkos*'] stylistic features are still characteristic of the gypsy ⁷

⁷ Two spellings of gipsy occur in the literature; the one with an "i" and the one with an "y". In my own writing, the former is used, but the other option occurs in some texts.

musicians' playing to this very day [1970]. On the basis of these stylistic features we erroneously - call the music played by the gypsy musicians "gypsy music".⁸ As we know from the previous chapter Bartók was thoroughly familiar with the more urban type of gypsy performance and disliked it.⁹

Bartók was also familiar with the *verbunkos* idiom and its various nineteenth century offshoots, the *csárdás*, Hungarian art songs and romantic works incorporating the idiom - what Hungarian musician would not be? Before becoming aware of authentic Hungarian folk music he wrote compositions influenced by the *verbunkos*, following Liszt's example. The *Kossuth Symphony*, for instance, contains, certain characteristics of the *verbunkos*,¹⁰ appropriately enough since this work depicts the events of the 1849 when Kossuth and his freedom-fighters attempted to liberate Hungary from foreign rule. When the discovery of authentic Hungarian folk music was made Bartók rid himself of this *verbunkos* influence. According to Somfai, "...the "verbunkos" was a characteristic Hungarian instrumental style that originated in the 18th century and which, in the mid-19th century became the source of all various Magyar-like music (*csárdás*, Hungarian art song, romantic composed Hungarian music) which Bartók rejected with such irritation around 1905-06, upon becoming acquainted with the peasant song."¹¹ He also wrote essays disproving the popular belief that gypsy music was folk music.¹²

In the 1920s, however, Bartók's attitude to the *verbunkos* changed. As Bónis says, "...he encountered the old type of *verbunkos* rooted in folk music, the type he did not know of from his earlier years."¹³ Many examples of this old type can be found in Bartók's instrumental folk items. In his ethnomusicological research, he traced its origin back to Hungarian and Ukrainian folk song and related it to a style of Rumanian instrumental folk

⁸ Bálint Sárosi, *op. cit.*, p.85.

⁹ See ch. 2, p.196.

¹⁰ Particularly in the "Funeral March" from this work.

¹¹ László Somfai, 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music 5*, p.8.

¹² For instance, see *BBE*, "Gipsy music or Hungarian music?".

¹³ Bónis, F. *Béla Bartók: His Life in Pictures and Documents* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1972), p.22.

music, called the *ardealana*.¹⁴ The discovery of this poly-national background and folk basis to the *verbunkos* must have made the idiom more appealing to Bartók. In 1926, Kodály integrated elements of this old *verbunkos* type into his singspiele, *Hary János*,¹⁵ followed a year later by the *Dances of Marosszék*, based on the same source. Probably stimulated by this, Bartók set about arranging a series of Rumanian, Hungarian and Ruthenian instrumental folk pieces in the *verbunkos* idiom; the result was *Rhapsodies Nos.1 and 2* for violin and piano (1928), both of which were orchestrated. As well as using *verbunkos* themes, Bartók adopted structural features from the *verbunkos* tradition. Kroó writes, "...Bartók always remained faithful to the *verbunkos* as a symbol of the Hungarian people and also retained the rhapsody form (pairing of slow and fast movements) that the *verbunkos* so often assumes".¹⁶ The combination of slow (*lassú*) and fast (*friss*) movements corresponds with the alternating slow and quick sections of the traditional *verbunkos*. This was the form used by Liszt in his *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, in the nineteenth century; it was Liszt's example that stimulated Bartók's adoption of this form.¹⁷ However, Liszt's rhapsodies employed the type of *verbunkos* based predominantly on popular art-songs he heard played by urban gipsies, while Bartók's rhapsodies comprised arrangements of folk-based *verbunkos* tunes, played by rural gipsies.

Following the rhapsodies, however, it is not until 1937-38 and the *Violin Concerto No.2* that we once again find the *verbunkos* influence in Bartók's music. The first movement of this work was originally marked *In tempo di verbunkos*. The first subject on the violin is a broad, arching melody with florid runs and a rhythmic flexibility that makes it similar in gesture to slow *verbunkos* melodies.

¹⁴ See *RFM* 1, p.49.

¹⁵ See, in particular, the "recruiting music" from *Hary János*. According to Bónis, "Kodály war es, ohne Zweifel, der den Verbunkos für die moderne Musik des 20 Jahrhunderts entdeckte" [Kodály it was, without a doubt, who discovered the *verbunkos* for modern music of the twentieth century]. From the author's essay, "Bartók und der Verbunkos" in *International Musicological Conference in commemoration of Béla Bartók, 1971*, p.152.

¹⁶ Kroó, "Bartók's Guiding Principles", *New Hungarian Quarterly*, v.22, 1981.

¹⁷ See Somfai, "Liszt's Influence on Bartók Reconsidered", *New Hungarian Quarterly* v.27, no.102, 1986, p.218.

Ex.2: *Violin Concerto 1937-38* movement I, bb.6-21, solo violin part.



This melody is distanced from the authentic *verbunkos* style by the pitch content, which is characteristic of the composer's own melodic language rather than any specific model. In the *Divertimento* (1939), the *verbunkos* is present only as an '*Erinnerungsbild*' [recollection or memory]:¹⁸

¹⁸ Bónis, *Ibid.*, p.153. According to Somfai, Bartók's intention, here, is probably ironic. The more sentimental aspect of the *verbunkos* (*sírva-vigadó* or "merrymaking in tears" as it is commonly known in Hungary) is being conjured, with quasi-romantic melodic gestures and harmonies which the gipsies incorporated into their performance style. See Somfai, "'Per finire': Some aspects of the Finale in Bartók's Cyclic Form", *op. cit.*, p.402, n.43. For a description of the nineteenth century phenomenon of "merrymaking in tears" in Hungary, see Sárosi *Gypsy Music*, pp.132-3.

Ex.3: *Divertimento* for string orchestra, III, bb.236-56.

236 poco a poco ritard

VI. I

VI. II

Vla.

Vcl. Solo

248 Piu lento, $J = 100$ rallentando

VI. I

VI. II

Vla.

Vcl. Solo

257 quasi cadenza molto rubato

molto volte ad lib.

rallent. molto

VI. I

VI. II

Vla.

Vcl. Solo

256

In the *String Quartet No.6* ("Marcia") and *Piano Concerto No.3*, I, Bartók no longer indicates the *verbunkos* element by titles such as that in *Contrasts*, I. In these compositions, the influence is further absorbed into his musical language; in *Contrasts*, however, the *verbunkos* idiom is felt more directly, in a stylised manner.

Perhaps an added incentive for Bartók to integrate the *verbunkos* idiom in an 'abstract' work such as *Contrasts* was the character of the *tempi* in slow *verbunkos* music.

In the violin rhapsodies, we can see how the opening slow movements are marked *molto moderato* with a steady dance pulse maintained most of the time. This is a different tempo/rhythm-type to the characteristic slow movement of Bartók's, as exemplified by *String Quartet No.5*, II and IV, *String Quartet No.4*, III, or the middle movements of *PS* or *Piano Concertos Nos.1 and 2*. With the aid of the *verbunkos*, Bartók creates for himself a different type of movement - moderate in tempo - which is in between the extremes of tempo seen in many of his other works.

By writing for violin and clarinet in *Contrasts*, Bartók emphasized two characteristic gipsy instruments. The violin, of course, was the chief instrument of the gipsies, taking over the role of the bagpipes in rural areas and being mastered by virtuosi such as Janos Bihari in the urban areas.¹⁹ As for the clarinet, Sárosi writes, "From the beginning the clarinet has been a characteristic, but not absolutely indispensable, feature of the Gipsy bands".²⁰ Aside from this aspect of the instrumentation, *Contrasts* was commissioned for Szigeti and Goodman, both virtuosi on their instruments.

The features of the *verbunkos* which we observed in relationship to Ex.2 are well demonstrated in the opening clarinet melody from the first movement of *Contrasts*: a broad melodic line, rhythmic variety and instrumental dexterity. We can compare elements of this melody with some examples from authentic *verbunkos* pieces, arranged by Bartók and Kodály (similar melodic ideas are given common labels):

Ex.4: (a) *Contrasts*, I, bb.3-13, clarinet part



¹⁹ Bihari was the most famous gipsy violinist of the nineteenth century, making many popular song-paraphrases and composing over eighty works. See Szabolcsi, *op. cit.*, pp.57-8.

²⁰ Sárosi, *op. cit.*, p.218.

(b) Kodály, *Dances of Galánta*, bb.55-7, clarinet.



(c) Kodály, *Dances of Galánta*, bb.27-33, vln. 2 (plus vln.1 in octaves).



(d) "De ciuit", for violin, from Satu-Mare; Lampert no.222; arranged by Bartók in *Rhapsody No.1*, I, opening melody.



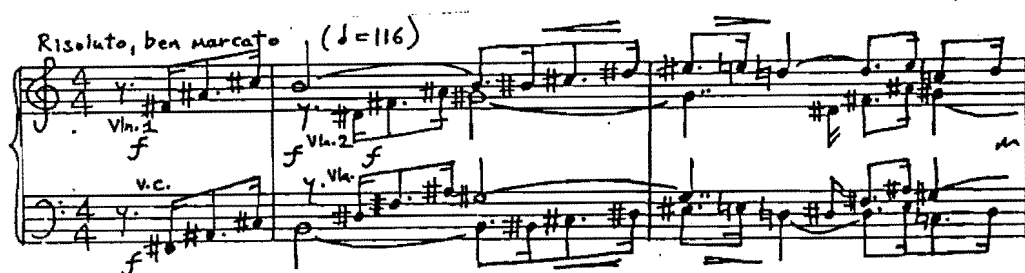
The dotted rhythms that are a typical feature of Hungarian folk music (as we noted in Chapter 1) are also very characteristic of the *verbunkos* as the melodies in Ex.4a, 4b and 4c show.²¹ The heroic quality of this nationalist music idiom is made manifest in these dotted rhythms. Ex.4d, for instance, comes from the category of Rumanian instrumental folk music labelled the 'heroic type' by Bartók, and this (along with the '*ardeleana* type') is related to the *verbunkos*, as Bartók observes.²²

These 'heroic' dotted rhythms also appear in the second movement of *String Quartet No.6*, entitled "Marcia", the opening theme closely resembling the melody from *Contrasts*.²³

²¹ See also Ex.1 in the present chapter.

²² The 'heroic type' and the '*Ardeleana* type' are described in *RFM 1*, pp.48-9.

²³ See Von Ilkka Oramo's essay "Marcia und Burletta Zur Tradition der Rhapsodie in Zwei Quartett sätzen Bartók's" in *Die Musikforschung* v.1, 1977, for further detailed comparison of the thematic material in *Contrasts* and *String Quartet No.6*.

Ex.5: *String Quartet No.6, "Marcia"*, bb.1-3 (piano reduction).

Theme 1 from *Contrasts* is still a typical Bartók melody, despite its *verbunkos* associations. This is due to the scale patterns used. The opening five bars of Ex.4a are based on the *heptatonia secunda* (in its 'acoustic' form) which is answered by a complementary phrygian mode (plus a 'foreign' E^b) altogether covering eleven pitches of the chromatic scale. Although the arpeggios at the end of the melody suggest typical gipsy virtuosity, the actual pitches played are typical of Bartók's style alone. Likewise, the cadence in b.10 is more baldly pentatonic in basis than would occur in a gipsy performance. Thus, Bartók imprints his own stylistic characteristics on the theme while still maintaining certain prominent features of the *verbunkos* idiom.

Following the opening clarinet melody, the violin varies the theme in bb.17-22, leading into a rhapsodic section based on elements of the theme. The virtuosity of the violin and clarinet lines with their rippling, high-flown gestures are suggestive of the *verbunkos* idiom (as shown in the present Ex.1). In the nineteenth century virtuosity was a prized attribute in music at serious and popular levels alike, Liszt and Bihari being two Hungarian representatives of these different levels.²⁴ Added to this was the great prowess of the

²⁴ Sárosi differentiates between the music played by rural gipsy clarinetists and urban ones, the latter "...who were virtuosos on their instruments". Sárosi, *op. cit.*, p.219.

performers for whom Bartók was writing, Szigeti and Goodman.²⁵ The attractive, luring quality of these ostentatious gestures is appropriate when we think of the original purpose of the *verbunkos* - to persuade peasants to join the army. The clarinet cadenza at the end of this movement is another aspect of this virtuosity, although cadenzas, as such, were not a part of the typical *verbunkos* form. In fact, this cadenza and the one in the third movement probably resulted from Szigeti's joking remark in a letter to Bartók in which the commission for *Contrasts* is made: "...and of course we hope it will also contain brilliant clarinet and violin cadenzas".²⁶

One other feature of the section from bb.15-29 is the seemingly improvisatory nature of the melody lines. On occasions, these lines bear no 'traditional' relation to the chordal accompaniment which consists of implied romantic harmonies plus 'wrong' notes.²⁷ Here, it would seem as if Bartók is attempting to imitate the rough harmonies and melody lines of a gipsy band which result from its improvisatory performing techniques. The following analysis gives a suggested 'traditional' harmonic basis and its relationship, or lack of it, to the melody lines:

²⁵ The modest role of the piano in *Contrasts* may seem surprising since Bartók was to perform this part. Bartók was a concert pianist and he wrote several virtuoso pieces, such as *PS* and the first two piano concertos for himself to play. However, as the letter of Szigeti's on p.20 of the 'Historical Background' shows, *Contrasts* was originally designed as a duet plus piano accompaniment rather than a fully-fledged trio. The accompanying role of the piano in *Contrasts* serves to heighten the virtuosity of the other parts. Although Bartók was to play the piano part for the recorded version (the piece was commissioned with this specifically in mind), in the first performance the part was played by Endre Petri (see plate 1). Bartók wished to be in the audience on this occasion to see if the work satisfied him.

²⁶ Letter to Bartók, 11 August, 1938, from the Somfai's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music 5*, p.10.

²⁷ The term 'classical' refers to the Western European 'Classical' Tradition (up to the end of the Romantic era, that is.)

Ex.6: *Contrasts*, I, reduction, bb.15-30 (articulation, dynamics omitted).

(Vln.) (Clar.) (P.F.)

Conventional triadic basis:

A: I⁷ (pentatonic seventh chord) VII⁷

(Clar.) (Vln.) (P.F.)

A: I^{7c} VII⁷ of V IV⁷_{#3} [non-triadic]

(Clar.) (Vln.) (P.F.)

(Passing note)

quartal chord, leading to D[#] → I⁷ in D[#] — Alternating E and C[#] triads, plus non-triadic elements based on 2:1 model

C[#]: I^{7b} I^{7b} D[#] triad (2nd inversion) + added 6th

B pentatonic seventh (1st inversion) I⁷_{#2} 4³ (alternating root and 2nd inversion) consecutive dominant 7th chords

(Clar.)₅

(Vln.)

(P.f.)

Whole-tone chords

Consecutive Dominant 7th chords:
plus non-triadic elements

non-triadic

(Augmented 6th chord suggested)

(b.30)

B \flat (Pedal-note, with triadic formations on top) ... Moving chromatically to G \sharp

The 'traditional' harmonic structure gradually disintegrates as more and more foreign notes are added. Following the chromatic sequence of seventh chords in bb.23-5, the triadic formations break down; there is no specific chord definable in 'traditional' terms on beat three of b.25. From this point until the cadence into the key of G \sharp at b.30, the three parts are harmonically independent.

Because the music of gipsy bands is not normally transcribed into full score it is difficult to compare it with the passage in *Contrasts*. However, the following extract from a gipsy band piece quoted by Sárosi's gives some idea of the clashes which occur between melody and harmony:²⁸

Ex.7: *Csárdás* (folksong): as played by a village gipsy band of four members; transcribed by Bálint Sárosi.

♩ = cca 69 poco a poco accel.

Violino I

Violino II

Zimbaló

Contrabasso

♩ = cca 88 poco a poco accel.

²⁸ Sárosi *Gypsy Music*, pp.232-3. This transcription comes from a recording of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences No. AP 6431/g. Recorded by György Martin and Bálint Sárosi in Szatmárökrítő (North-east Hungary).



Sárosi comments:²⁹

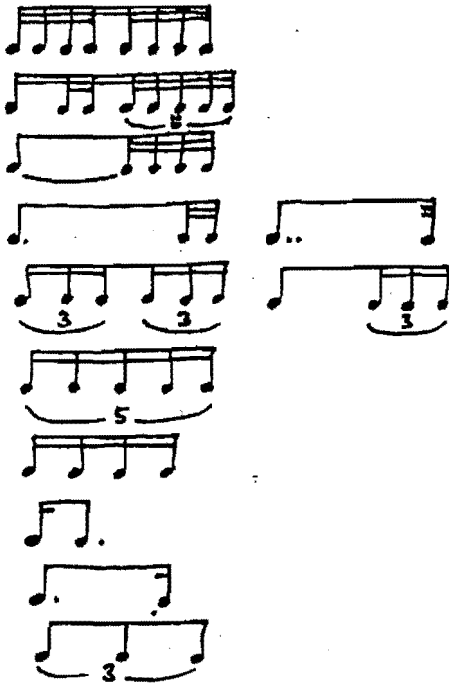
Below the melodic notes or groups of notes the performers strive to play the most consonant root position triads - major triads if possible - and more rarely they mix in an occasional dominant seventh type of chord, too. Naturally, alongside this - chiefly due to the improvisational style of performance - other chords are also heard, generally quite independently of the performers' intentions.

It is unlikely that these particular features of gipsy performance would have impressed Bartók, whether he heard them in the country or in the city.³⁰ His intentions in *Contrasts* may, therefore, have been satirical, as seems to have been the case in the passage from the *Divertimento*, quoted in Ex.3.

The "striking and extensive sets of rhythms" which Szabolcsi mentions in relation to the *verbunkos* is certainly true of the extract in Ex.6. The following list shows some of the rhythms present, in the space of one crotchet beat:

²⁹ Sárosi, *op. cit.*, p.226.

³⁰ There is no proof from Bartók's transcriptions that he ever heard a band of more than two players in the country.

Ex.8: Rhythms from *Contrasts* movement I.

In the recapitulation (bb.57-84), the *verbunkos* features in the music vanish, except for the dotted rhythms which are maintained in a developmental capacity. As if to show up the emptiness of virtuosity, the clarinet and violin have a simple, sustained melody, folk-like in its modality:

Ex.9: *Contrasts* movement I, violin (doubled at two octaves, unison by clarinet) bb.72-84.

The cadential quality of this melody, with the emphasis on the interval of a perfect fourth, relates it to theme 1 (Ex.4) and the main cadence. (The relationship between this theme and

theme 1 is further explored in Chapter 6.) Particularly Hungarian-sounding is the phrase in bb.80-1 where the pentatonic scale C-E^b-F-G-B^b is implied.

In chapter 1, we discussed the influence of Hungarian folk tunes on the melody in the middle section of this movement (bb.30-57).³¹ This tune is arranged by Bartók in *Rhapsody No.1* for violin. It is notable that this piece incorporates the *verbunkos* idiom even more directly than is the case in *Contrasts*. Aside from the characteristics of the tune, there are also dotted rhythms in the clarinet part, in bb.34-7, a sliding counter-melody in bb.30-3 which derives from theme 1, complex rhythms and the virtuosity of bb.37-44, and banal, triadic harmonies in bb.34-42. In the climax of the section (bb.45-57), these features are absent except for the dotted rhythms.³²

Further connections between *Contrasts* and the violin rhapsodies can be made as regards the form. The score of *Contrasts* originally comprised movements 1 and 3, only, in response to Szigeti's request that "...the composition should consist of two independent parts (with the possibility of playing them separately - like the first rhapsody for violin)".³³ Following the first performance, Bartók added the middle movement. Therefore, the original two-movement form of *verbunkos* paired with *sebes* ('fast dance') corresponds to the *lassú-friss* form of the rhapsodies, derived from the slow and fast sections of the authentic *verbunkos*.³⁴ A final proof of this formal influence can be found in the poster advertising the first performance of *Contrasts*, which refers to a 'Rhapsody' for clarinet, violin and piano:

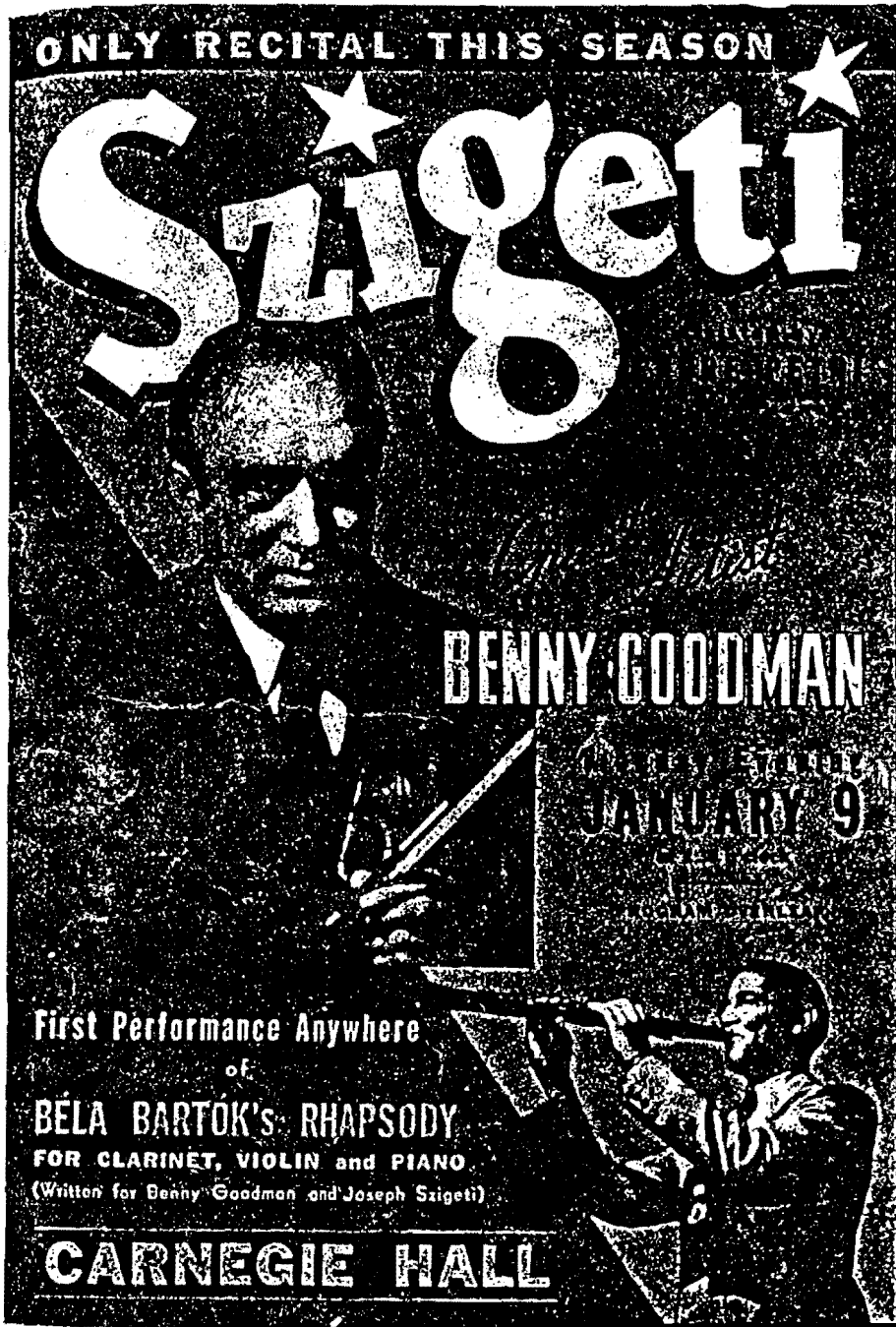
31 Ch.1, pp.118-22.

32 The piano's glissandi in bb.45-57 might be an imitation of cimbalom *glissandi* (the cimbalom being a common instrument in gipsy bands), despite Bartók's apparent disinterest in the instrument.

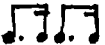
33 Letter to Bartók, August 11, 1938, from Somfai's 'Notes' to *Bartók Béla Chamber Music* 5, p.10.

34 The pairing of slow and fast movements also appears in Liszt's rhapsodies, in imitation of the *verbunkos* as played by urban gipsies; see n.17 from the present chapter.

Plate 1: Poster for the performance of Bartók's 'Rhapsody' (later entitled 'Contrasts').



Bartók's conception of this work is similar to that of the violin rhapsodies, although he does not appear to have been happy with the title, 'Rhapsody'.³⁵ His decision to add the movement, *Pihenő* [relaxed], and disturb the rhapsody form shows his scrupulous and objective self-criticism.³⁶

The influence of the *verbunkos* idiom extends more indirectly into the finale of *Contrasts*. Above all, it is the movement's regularity of the rhythm and phraseology which aligns with the fast *verbunkos* (later known as *csárdás* ³⁷). There are only three changes of the 2/4 metre (all occurring between b.90 and b.100) apart from the appearance of the Bulgarian metre in the middle section. In the passage following the violin cadenza, there are four four-bar phrases, comprising two statements and answering phrases (see bb.214-33). Such traditional periodicity is not typical of Bartók's music and suggests some specific influence. (This is not to underestimate the other characteristic rhythmic devices used in this movement, such as 'shifted rhythm' and cross rhythm.) Virtuosity is also a prominent feature in a more 'popular' sense as in the spectacular gestures towards the end of the movement. This is somewhat different from the type of virtuosity in finales to works such as *String Quartets No.4* and *5*, or *Piano Concerto No.2*, which results more from 'pure' musical ideas. The dotted rhythm sequence  in bb.65-80 is a rhythmic type Bartók once labelled "anti-Hungarian"³⁸, but here is part of the *verbunkos* idiom (as well as developing on the rhythm of theme 1). As we saw in Chapter 2, however, there are features

³⁵ Kárpáti quotes a letter of Bartók's, written in 1938: "I do not like the title "Rhapsody" very much; I would rather have "Two Dances", instead. Kárpáti, *Bartók Kamarazenéje* [Bartók's Chamber Music], p.328.

³⁶ It also disturbed Goodman's intention of fitting *Contrasts* onto a double-sided, twelve-inch disc for commercial release, the duration being increased by over four minutes. See Szigeti, *With Strings Attached. Reminiscences and Reflections* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p.129.

³⁷ The word, *csárdás*, literally means "roadside inn", but became associated with the fast *verbunkos*, contrasting with *palotás*, which literally means "palace", and refers to a type of slow dance. The *csárdás* became a very popular type of dance about 1850-60 (and in the years following). See Sárosi, *op. cit.*, pp.89-91, and Szabolcsi, *op. cit.*, pp.63-4.

³⁸ See *BBE*, 'Harvard Lectures', IV, p.384. He makes the same point on p.77 and p.88 of *BBE*.

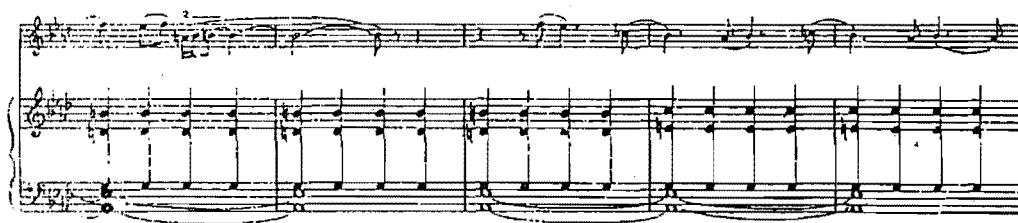
in this movement which are more specifically related to folk music, such as the scales employed (modes, 'acoustic scale') and the directly folk-like statements of theme 2 in bb.103-18 and bb.248-73.

Therefore, *Contrasts* contains elements of a style of music only partly rooted in folk music. In the previous chapter, we found a certain jazz influence in the third movement. Another source of inspiration for the opening of the work seems to have been the "Blues" movement from Ravel's *Violin Sonata* which Bartók and Szigeti performed together, in 1935. Szigeti wrote, "When rehearsing *Contrasts*, Bartók told me the beginning of the work was suggested to him by the pizzicato opening of the "Blues" section in Ravel's Sonata, which we had played together so often":³⁹

Ex.11: Ravel *Violin Sonata* movement II ("Blues"), bb.1-19.

The musical score for Ravel's *Violin Sonata*, movement II ("Blues"), measures 1-19, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, marked "Moderato" with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. The violin part starts with a "pizz." (pizzicato) instruction, and the piano accompaniment is marked "pp" (pianissimo). The second system continues the piece, with the violin part marked "f" (forte) and the piano accompaniment marked "p" (piano). The third system shows the end of the movement, with the violin part marked "nostalgico" and "arco sul la 2", and the piano accompaniment marked "simile".

³⁹ Szigeti, Joseph, from the article "Making Music with Bartók", in *The Long Player*, v.2, no.10 (New York: October 1953), pp.10-12. See also Bónis, "Quotations in Bartók's Music", *Studia Musicologica*, v.5, 1963, pp.372-3.



The use of these various elements together with the influence of folk music show Bartók to be an eclectic, rejecting no source so long as it was "clean, fresh and healthy!"⁴⁰

⁴⁰ From a letter to Octavian Beu, 10 January, 1931, *Béla Bartók Letters*, p.201.

CHAPTER 4

THE 'SOUND-WORLD' OF PEASANT MUSIC AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BARTOK. MISTAKE IMITATIONS IN BARTOK'S MUSIC.

In the first part of this chapter, an attempt will be made to analyse the effect of the peasants' 'sound-world' (in terms of music) upon Bartók's compositions, as exemplified in the works under study. The meaning of the expression, 'sound-world', is the idiosyncratic tone quality or timbre of peasant music. This aspect is, itself, divided into two main areas: the 'sound-world' of singing, and the 'sound-world' of instrumental performance. In the second part of this chapter, we shall examine the hypothesis that Bartók imitated the accidental effects and 'wrong notes' he observed in folk music.¹ Although 'mistake-imitations' constitute a separate subject to the 'sound-world', they are related by their common origin in the performance aspect of folk music. Both these areas of possible folk influence are an aspect hitherto unexplored, as far as the author is aware.² This chapter is, however, no more than an opening up of these areas for further exploration; considerably more research must be undertaken before firm conclusions can be reached.

The first step to take in dealing with these two, rather nebulous aspects is to find out what significance Bartók attached to them. There are several statements in Bartók's

¹ The expression 'wrong notes' is deemed to cover unexpected pitches or rhythms which clearly disrupt the regular pattern, whether these are accidental or on purpose.

² There has been a considerable amount written about the imitation of natural sounds in Bartók's music, with regard to his 'night music' pieces; most recently, for instance, is Somfai's essay "The Construction of Nature's Noises" from "Analytical Notes on Bartók's Piano Year 1926", *op.cit.* Some comment on this aspect of the rural 'sound-world' is made in ch.6 of this thesis, regarding *Contrasts*, II, to some extent an example of 'night music'.

essays which support the view that he considered both the sound quality of folk music and its various irregularities of pitch and rhythm important and worthy of attention:³

Furthermore, it does not suffice for a musician to notate exactly these [peasant] melodies by ear alone; we must have recourse to the phonograph or the gramophone as often as possible, even if we have to deal with apparently simple melodies. That is because the peasant's singing style is full of peculiarities, often very characteristic and worthy of recording with precision (such as *portamento* of the voice, irrational rhythms, and so forth) which - for lack of diacritical marks - we are hardly able to note down on paper with our conventional symbols.

This statement comes from an essay about Hungarian folk music. A similar message is provided in his introduction to the collection of Rumanian folk songs:⁴

By merely looking at transcriptions, it is absolutely impossible to conceive exactly what the singing sounds like. One has to listen to at least one or two recorded pieces to obtain the right conception; indeed, this experience should facilitate understanding of this style even though the remainder of the melodies are read as transcriptions.

In an statement made earlier in life, Bartók relates this point to the composer in a persuasive manner:⁵

In the process of notation that very essence of peasant music is lost, which enables it to awake the emotions in the soul of the composer. The harsh characters cannot possibly render the subtler shades of rhythm, of intonation, of sound-transitions, in a word all the pulsing life of peasant music. The record of peasant music is as it were the picture of its corpse. He who has never heard the actual melodies or similar ones from the mouths of the peasants themselves will never obtain a true idea of them by the mere reading of the score.

The importance of sound recordings of folk music for Bartók is further borne out by the enthusiastic and strenuous efforts he made to have them released commercially on gramophone record during the 1930s. Spurred on by the example set in Rumania where folk music disks were being produced, he requested assistance from the Hungarian Prime Minister as well as the Ethnographic Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to

³ BBE, "Hungarian Folk Music" (1921), p.59. See also BBE, "Why and How we Collect Folk Music?", p.14, for elaboration of this subject.

⁴ RFM 2, pp.15-16.

⁵ BBE, "The Relation of Folk Song to the Development of the Art Music of our Time" (1921). pp.324-5.

proceed with the project. The result was the "Patria" series, consisting of almost fifty records of Hungarian folk music.⁶

This, in addition to the statements above, strongly suggest that any study of the folk music influence on Bartók's compositions requires at least some consideration of the peasants' 'sound-world' and the performance peculiarities. Comparison of transcriptions with Bartók's music is not adequate for such a consideration; exposure to sound recordings is imperative. Although the above quotations concern vocal music, from the author's own experience the remarks would apply equally to the instrumental idiom. However, as we saw in chapter 2, Bartók did not regard instrumental performance as highly as vocal performance because the former was predominantly in the hands of the gipsies.⁷ Nonetheless, both need to be considered in this chapter.

Bartók's musical aesthetics were moulded by his exposure to folk music. He responded positively to its economy, simplicity and directness of expression, finding in it "...the classical model of how to express an idea musically in the most concise form, with the greatest simplicity of means, with freshness and life, briefly yet completely and properly proportioned".⁸ We find in much of his music written after the time of his discovery of folk music a paring down of elements, an elimination of unessential gestures and decoration, and a concentration on the more basic, essential features. In his piano works, he developed a style of "bone and muscle", as he called it,⁹ a more transparent and simple style free of "...the excesses of the Romanticists".¹⁰ This can be traced back to his arrangements of Hungarian and Slovakian folk tunes in the piano series, *For Children* (written in 1908-9), the most basic starting point for studying the folk influence in Bartók's music. In 1908, Bartók

⁶ Bartók left the project in 1939 when he discovered records had been put in the shops without the accompanying notes and transcriptions (and without his prior knowledge). Many more records in this series were produced after he left. See Somfai's 'Notes' to *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with Béla Bartók's Transcriptions*, p.19.

⁷ See ch.2, p.196.

⁸ *BBE*, p.322.

⁹ An expression Bartók used when discussing his piano music at an interview in English from the 'Ask the Composer' concert, held in New York, 1944. See *Bartók Record Archives*, ed. László Somfai, János Sebestyén and Zoltán Kocsis, p.26.

¹⁰ *BBE*, "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music" (1931), p.340.

had completed the *Bagatelles* for piano; thirty-seven years later, he wrote "In these [pieces], a new piano style appears as a reaction to the exuberance of the romantic piano music of the nineteenth century - a style devoid of all unessential decorative elements, deliberately using only the most restricted technical means. As later developments indicate, the *Bagatelles* inaugurate a new trend of piano writing in my career, which is consistently followed in almost all of my successive piano works...".¹¹ The line of such piano works includes *Allegro Barbaro* (1911), the *Suite*, op.14 (1916), other piano arrangements of folk music, such as *Colinde* (1915) and *Improvisations* (1920), through to the 'piano music year' which includes *Out of Doors* and the *PS*. While the influence of his Romantic predecessors was not immediately expelled (as we can see in music as late as the first movement of *VS I*), the new stylistic feature gradually pervaded most of his works.

There were, undoubtedly, other influences on the formation of this new style. The austere, unromantic style of Stravinsky's later Russian works, such as *Pribouatki*, seem to have impressed Bartók; here again, the influence of folk music (Russian) in Stravinsky's music was of importance in the formation of his style and it this aspect which particularly interested Bartók.¹² In any case, works such as the *Bagatelles* and *Allegro Barbaro* were written well before the aforementioned works by Stravinsky. Another significant influence was the early, pre-classical keyboard music Bartók played and edited (which we have remarked upon already). This particularly concerns the 1926 piano works as it was about this time he was pursuing his studies of the keyboard music of Frescobaldi, Rossi, Della Ciaia, Zipoli and Marcello. In conversation with Calvocoressi, Bartók stated: "I am deeply interested in them [the aforementioned composers], especially from the point of view of style. The austere, virile style of Frescobaldi and Rossi attracts me greatly."¹³ 'Austere' and 'virile' are adjectives we could apply to Bartók's own keyboard compositions of this time, as well, and are part of his "bone and muscle" style. This influence, and others,

¹¹ John Vinton, "Bartók on his Own Music", p.234.

¹² See, for instance, *BBE*, "The Influence of Folk Music on the Art Music of Today", pp.317-8.

¹³ Malcolm Gillies, "A Conversation with Bartók: 1929", from a draft copy of this article, p.5.

should make us wary of ascribing all aspects of this style to Bartók's exposure to folk music.

The aesthetic gulf between Bartók's music and the musical tastes of his audiences has been well documented. While this was partly due to the pitch content and rhythm of Bartók's works, it seems likely the type of tone quality inherent in them would also have had a decisive effect upon the audience. One of the sources of this aesthetic gulf is the folk music influence in Bartók's music. According to the composer, "the average musician" of his time found peasant music "empty and inexpressive".¹⁴ Once again, it is the timbre as much as the pitch content of peasant music that is likely to have been so strange to educated, urban ears, so recent was the 'discovery' of this music.

Therefore, an examination of the influence of the peasant's 'sound-world' on Bartók's music would seem to be a valid area of research. In order to carry out this examination (and in keeping with Bartók's opinion), we need to listen to recordings of folk music. These are provided on a cassette accompanying the text. Most examples come from Bartók's own recordings, and, as was explained in the 'Review', they include folk music from Hungary and North Africa (Arabic), only. Transcriptions are referred to also, especially in the second part of this chapter which is concerned with the 'wrong notes' in folk music. In the first part, consideration of the 'sound-world' is divided into two sections: vocal and instrumental performance.

¹⁴ *BBE*. "The Relation of Folk Song to the Development of the Art Music of our Time", p.322.

THE 'SOUND-WORLD': VOCAL PERFORMANCE

According to Bartók, the typical peasant singer had "a most natural tone emission".¹⁵ Rumanian peasants produced a "full chest-tone", and Hungarians used "only chest-tones".¹⁶ Generally, the women Bartók recorded sang in a low register while the men sang in a high one. While much of the singing sounds natural and unforced, many singers from various countries and regions produce an intense, 'hard' tone which occasionally becomes strident and even raucous. The folk songs from the county of Bihar in Rumania often feature this strident, raucous tonal quality, which becomes particularly evident in the higher tessitura, as if the voice were straining to get the notes.¹⁷ This feature is well exemplified by folk songs that begin with an upward, octave leap such as in many items from Hungary, and some Hungarian-influenced items from Maramureş; the contrast in tone between the low and high notes is very marked.¹⁸ The following tape extracts provide examples of this typical, 'hard' variety of folk singing which tends to become raucous in tone. This feature is more pronounced in group singing:¹⁹

TAPE EXAMPLE 1:

Hungarian folk songs: (a) M.H. 998a, from Felsőíreg, recorded 1907; *HFS* 144; from *Hungarian Folk Music collected by Béla Bartók. Phonograph cylinders*, ed. Bálint Sárosi, Hungaroton LPX 18069; side 1, 1e.

(b) M.H. 363b, from Békés County, recorded 1906; *HFS* 148; from *ibid.*; side 1, 3d.

¹⁵ *RFM* 2, p.42.

¹⁶ *RFM* 2, p.36, *HFS*, p.50.

¹⁷ An example of this, not available for tape, is M.F. 2005a, from Bihar, transcribed and revised as No.69a in *RFM* 2.

¹⁸ See, for instance *RFM* 5, Nos.92b (M.F. 2129a) and 42 (M.F.2131b). The octave leap is, in fact, an Hungarian characteristic. Bartók found that many vocal items from Maramures were influenced by Hungarian folk song.

¹⁹

In these tape examples, we must take care to distinguish between the hard tonal qualities of the singing (or playing) and distortions of sound from the original recording, caused by the primitive recording equipment.

(c) M.H. 968a, from Mureş, recorded 1907;
from *ibid.*; side 1, 4c.

(d) M.H. 3741a, from Pest m., (no date);
from *ibid.*; side 1, 4f.

(e) MH 3900b, from Kisgörgény, recorded 1914;
from *ibid.*; side 1, 6b.

The recordings Bartók made of Ruthenian folk song, likewise, include raucous-toned singing. The performers frequently transpose up an octave during a song if the tessitura becomes too low, the tone becoming noticeably harsher on the transposed pitches:

Ex.1: Ruthenian folk song from Bartók's collection (unpublished).



Octave transposition occurs in folk song from other countries which Bartók collected in. He describes this "remarkable practice" in his introduction to *HFS*.²⁰

The hard but natural tone of peasant singing is something that it is obviously impossible for Bartók to imitate in his instrumental compositions. However, he attempts to integrate it into the quasi-folk tune from the finale of *PS*, which is presented in the first episode of that movement (bb.53-82). The imitation of "...a strident *vocal* performance", as Somfai calls it, is created through the use of emphatic *sforzando* markings. There is even the suggestion of a 'shout', in b.77, with the sudden octave discord (and *sforzando*). In

²⁰ *HFS*, p.50-1.

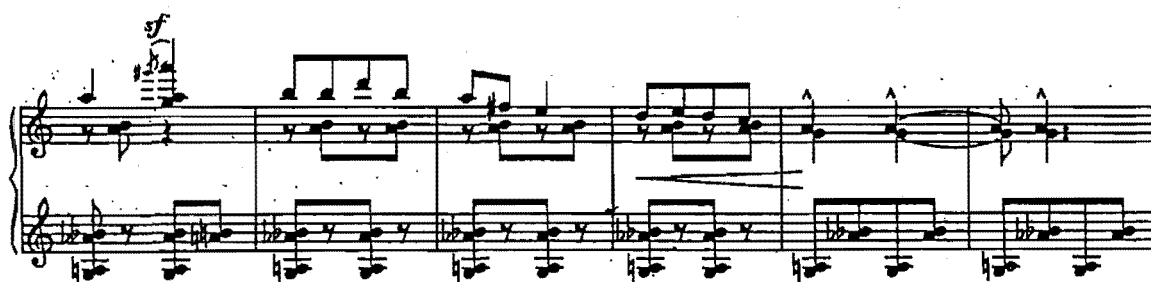
some of the songs Bartók recorded, the performer shouts some notes in excitement, especially in dance songs:²¹

Ex.2: *PS*, III, bb.53-82.

The musical score is for a piece in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four systems of piano and right-hand staves. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line with various dynamics and articulations.

- System 1:** Right hand starts with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a *f* dynamic, and ends with a *mf* dynamic. The piano part is marked *p*.
- System 2:** Right hand starts with a *f* dynamic, followed by a *mf* dynamic, and ends with a *f* dynamic. The piano part is marked *p*.
- System 3:** Right hand starts with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a *f* dynamic, and ends with a *f* dynamic. The piano part is marked *p*.
- System 4:** Right hand starts with a *poco rit.* marking, followed by a *a tempo* marking. The piano part is marked *p*.

²¹ In instrumental folk music, 'dance words' are often shouted above the music by the dancers.



It is also noticeable how little fluctuation of dynamic level there is. Marks of expression are few apart from the *sforzandos*. This is also characteristic of the type of *tempo giusto* folk singing Bartók regarded as being genuine and unaffected by foreign influences. The songs were generally delivered with an evenness of tone on individual notes or groups of notes, although, as stated before, the change to a higher tessitura was often accompanied by a natural increase in volume. Likewise, there is a lack of articulation in Ex.2, aside from the occasional accent, which is in keeping for the type of syllabic, 'dance' tune it imitates. Similar remarks could be made about the other quasi-folk tunes in *PS*, namely themes 2 and 4 (and 5) of the first movement.

Another feature of the singing in Ex.1 is the heaviness of tone. We can hear this in the following Hungarian folk song:

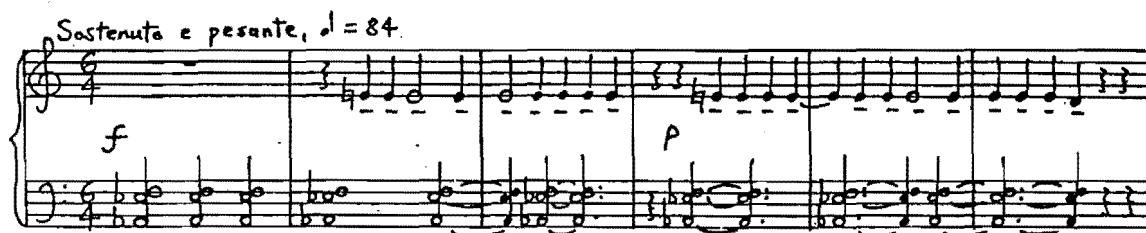
TAPE EXAMPLE 2:

Hungarian folk song: MH 995b from Felsőíreg, recorded 1907; HFS 7a;
Hungarian Folk Music Collected by Béla Bartók.
 Gramophone Records, ed. Bálint Sárosi, Hungaroton LPX
 18069; side 1,1c.

Many of the *colinde* Bartók collected have a similarly ponderous tone. This is something we can also hear in several of his slow movements, even where direct folk music imitation is absent. The second movement of *PS* is a good example of this, with its *sostenuto e pesante*

marking and monotonous, unrelenting drive. The mood is set in the opening six bars, the simple reiteration of chords and notes (with stresses) creating a sense of tired depression:

Ex.3: *PS*, II, bb.1-6.



Damiana Bratuz states that this movement is in the style of a dirge and refers to the melencholy *parlando* songs of 'Old' style Hungarian folk song.²² We cannot be this specific, however, because no genre is imitated, despite the bare pentatonicism in later passages. While it is true that nearly all the *parlando*, 'Old' style songs from Hungary are sad in mood, the heavy tone quality is something common to several of the regions and nations Bartók collected in, as we have seen. The second movement is essentially abstract in style with a 'sound-world' that links it with a mode of folk singing.

The slow movement of *Piano Concerto No.1* (written about the same time as *PS*) is similar in its 'sound-world' to *PS*, II. In the following passage from this movement, the hard, heavy tone of peasant singing is evoked without imitation of specific folk styles or genres:

²² Damiana Bratuz, *The Folk Element in the Piano Music of Béla Bartók*, Ph.D., diss., University of Oklahoma Press, 1965, p.166.

Ex.4: *Piano Concerto No.1* (1926), II, b.7[8]-[9]b.5.

The musical score for *Piano Concerto No. 1*, II, measures 7-9, is presented in a multi-staff format. The instruments included are Tuba, Trombone, Piano, Clarinet, Flute, and Violin. The score is in 2/4 time. The piano part is particularly prominent, featuring a series of chords and arpeggios. The woodwinds and strings provide a rich, textured background. The music is characterized by a heavy, brooding quality with a mix of staccato and legato passages. The piano part is particularly prominent, featuring a series of chords and arpeggios. The woodwinds and strings provide a rich, textured background. The music is characterized by a heavy, brooding quality with a mix of staccato and legato passages.

The timbre and mood of these movements is slightly different to the timbre and mood of Bartók's 'night music' movements (also slow in tempo). In the latter, there is not the same heavy, depressed tone although the mood is often melancholy and there are the descriptive, 'natural' sounds (of the night) which provide a sharp contrast to the expressive 'vocal' lines. This can be seen in the prototype of this genre, "The Night's Music" from *Out of Doors* which is contemporaneous with *PS* and *Piano Concerto No.1*. Similar features are present in the second movement of *Contrasts*. The brooding, heavy quality of the violin

and clarinet lines (with these instruments playing in their lower register) is offset by the rumbling sounds of the piano:

Ex.5: *Contrasts*, II, bb.1-11.

In more general terms, the 'sound-world' of these movements depicts a human being (symbolized by the quasi-folk tunes of the violin and clarinet) communing with Nature (symbolized by the 'sound-effects' of the piano). Bartók finds a solution to the problems of humanity in a return to Nature.²³ In the heavy, brooding 'sound-world' of *PS*, II, however, there is no solution presented.

Aside from the tone quality of peasant singing, there are many "peculiarities" of performance that are part of this 'sound-world'. Bartók describes many idiosyncracies in his Rumanian folk music collections, such as the 'clucking' *appoggiatura* in the *hora lunga* ('long song') of Maramureş.²⁴ These songs are "entirely improvisatory" and instrumental in

²³ This is discussed further in ch.6. See Bence Szabolcsi's "Man and Nature in Bartók's World", *Bartók Studies*, pp. 63-75.

²⁴ *RFM* 5, p.11.

Ex.7: *String Quartet No.6, "Marcia"*, bb.80-97.

Rubato Animato, molto agitato
 J. 100 [88]

pp₃ cresc. pizz.
 [89]

Sostenuto
 J. 98 [94]

arco

The agitated tremolos and guitar-like strummings in the violin and viola parts provide a tense and impassioned accompaniment to the quasi-vocal line. This type of imitation bears out Bartók's statements about the importance of listening to folk music; despite his most meticulous transcriptions of *hora lunga*, the correlation between them and his *hora lunga* - imitation cannot be fully appreciated without reference to sound recordings.

Ex.9: VS1, I, violin, extracts.

Handwritten musical score for 'Calando' by J. S. Zich. The score is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. A box containing the number '8' is above the first measure. The music features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a forte 'f' dynamic marking and a '6' fingering. The second staff continues the melody with a mezzo-forte 'mf' dynamic, a '9' fingering, and a '5' fingering. The third staff includes a mezzo-forte 'mf' dynamic, a '27' fingering, and a '6' fingering. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a piano 'p' dynamic, a '12' fingering, and the tempo marking 'Calando'. The score is characterized by dense, rapid sixteenth-note passages and various dynamic markings including 'f', 'ff', 'mf', 'p', and 'pp'.

However, it also seems very likely that such passages were directly inspired by Bartók's studies of Szymanowski's violin music, which are full of special effects not dissimilar to the extract above. Consider the following, from the Polish composer's work, *Myths*, for violin and piano (written in 1917):

Ex.10: Szymanowski, *Myths* for violin and piano, I, final nine bars.

The musical score is for the final nine bars of Szymanowski's *Myths* for violin and piano, I. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the violin (Vln) and piano (P.F.) parts. The second system includes the instruction "molto diminuendo e rallentando". The third system includes the instruction "perdendosi". The fourth system includes the instruction "(perdendosi)" and ends with a double bar line.

Naturally, a large number of the folk songs Bartók heard did not have the special tonal features described above. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, he did not always choose to set or imitate the most typical songs. Occasionally, he was impressed by unusual features in a folk music item and integrated them into his own music. Therefore, it is conceivable he was influenced by the characteristics of the peasant's 'sound-world' that we have examined so far.

THE 'SOUND-WORLD': INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Bartók was less impressed with instrumental folk music than vocal, as we have seen in earlier chapters. With the virtual obsolescence of the bagpipes in many areas, his main source of instrumental music was gipsy violinists, with all those mannerisms that distorted the true folk qualities and their "thoroughly unreliable" intonation.²⁷ However, Bartók did find peasant violinists, in Bihar, Rumania, and most of the gipsies from more isolated rural areas played in a genuine peasant style.²⁸ There were also other instruments, such as the flute, Jew's harp and alphorn which the gipsy did not play. The bagpipe music he did collect was of considerable significance to him. His various settings (and imitations) of instrumental folk music show that this source was capable of inspiring Bartók, the composer.

Bagpipes:

Despite the rarity of the bagpipes, it was the folk instrument that exerted the most influence on Bartók, as we saw in Chapter 1 (see p.24). As well as the actual bagpipe items he collected, there are many pieces in his collection for violin (and other instruments) which imitate the bagpipe idiom - we saw examples of these in Chapter 2. Consequently, when considering the possible effect of a folk violin piece on a musical idea of Bartók's we may well be dealing, in essence, with a bagpipe piece. This is important regarding the particular 'sound-world' involved.

On pp.97-8 of Chapter 1, we discussed the demonic associations of the bagpipes in relation to the aborted episode in the third movement of *PS*. The rough, raucous tone of the bagpipes is appropriate for these associations. The chief function of the bagpiper was accompanying dances and, consequently, the music he played was continuous, pulsating

²⁷ See *RFM* 5, p.43.

²⁸ See *BBE*, "Gipsy Music or Hungarian Music?", p.222.

and loud, creating an exciting and even intoxicating atmosphere for the merry-makers. In the following tape extracts from Bartók's collection, we can hear the typical 'sound-world' of the bagpipes:

TAPE EXAMPLE 3:

Hungarian bagpipe pieces: (a) M.H.796a, from Nagymegyer, recorded 1910;
Hungarian Folk Music Collected by Béla Bartók.
Phonograph Cylinders, ed. Bálint Sárosi, Hungaroton,
 LPX 18069; side 1, no.5a.

(b) Two bagpipe items from Borsod, recorded 1938;
 from *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with*
Bartók's Transcriptions, ed. László Somfai, Hungaroton
 LPX 18058-60; side F.1a; transcription no.1a,b and
 1a,c (pp.33-34).

The quality of recording is higher in Ex.3 (b) than in the previous tape examples. These items date from 1938, being part of the 'Patria series'. The high, 'squeaky' notes are a characteristic sound in East European bagpipe music, as are the rough, off-pitch notes. Although these features often seem to be unintentional, Bartók faithfully transcribes them all. This is significant for the aspect of 'mistake-imitations' in Bartók's music, which will be discussed in the latter half of this chapter.

The rather harsh sound of the bagpipes is integrated into Bartók's bagpipe arrangements and imitations as we saw in Chapter 2. A prime example of this is the aborted 'bagpipe' episode from *PS*, III, which found its final form as "Musettes" from *Out of Doors* (see ch.1). Somfai's interesting description of the qualities of peasant bagpipe performance imitated in this piece point to additional features of the 'sound-world'; "...the playfulness and cosiness of the way it is blown, the whine it makes, and its often out-of tune intonation".²⁹ The whining tone and intonational discrepancies are evident in Tape Ex.3, and we can hear to a certain extent the 'playfulness' of the bagpipe in the *aprája* passages in Ex.3a, with its bubbling, squeaking noises. In the other stylised 'bagpipe' passages from the works under study, however, it is mainly the diabolic sound qualities that are evoked - as in *VS1*, III, theme 2 or the 'bagpipe' episode from the same movement, or the climactic

²⁹ László Somfai, "Analytical Notes", *op. cit.*, p.27.

passages from *Contrasts*, III. This is also true of bagpipe imitations from other works of Bartók's; *Violin Sonata No.2*, II, for example, in passages such as the one below where a dissonant and obsessive piano figuration accompanies folk-like motives on the violin. (The high, snatched chords would seem to be imitations of the bagpipe 'squeaks', which we heard in Tape Ex.3(b)):

Ex.11: *Sonata No.2* for Violin and Piano, II, b.2 [27] - [28] b.1.

The musical score is for the second movement of Bartók's Violin Sonata No. 2. It is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Allegro, (J. 190)'. The score is divided into two systems, each with a violin staff and a piano staff. The piano part features a dissonant and obsessive figuration, while the violin part features folk-like motives. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'pina poco marcato', 'pp leggiero', 'a tempo', 'non arpeggiando', 'sempre p. a poco marcato', 'sempre pp', and 'simile'. The measure numbers 27 and 28 are indicated in boxes.

Likewise, the following passage evokes the wild, frenetic 'sound-world' of bagpipes, in an abstract manner:

Ex.12: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, IV, bb.166-80.

170

Arpa

Pfte.

1. VI.

2. VI.

1. Vla.

1. Vlo.

3. VI.

4. VI.

2. Vla.

2. Vlo.

ff

simile

simile

simile

sempre simile

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

non div.

non div.

Xyl.
 Arpa
 Pfte.
 1. Vl.
 2. Vl.
 1. Vle.
 1. Vlc.
 1. Cb.
 3. Vl.
 4. Vl.
 2. Vle.
 2. Vlc.
 2. Cb.

The melody dissolves into a wash of noise. It is a little similar in texture to a setting of a peasant violin melody in [14] - [18] from the second movement of *Rhapsody No.2*; where the violin imitates the bagpipes and the orchestra (or piano) adds a thick, noisy accompaniment (see Ex.15).

Many of the bagpipes Bartók recorded were in rather bad condition and, consequently, produced a poor tone. Some of the Rumanian items, however, were of particularly high standard, especially the playing of a young bagpiper from Hunedoara, Lazăr Lăscus, of whom Bartók wrote "...the best bagpipe player I have ever met".³⁰ Aside from Lăscus's huge variety of melodic motives, the tone he produced was very clean and in tune (compared with the items on tape Ex.3, for instance), allowing the peculiar fluctuations of scale to be clearly heard. The use of dual third, fourth and seventh degrees is close to the types of chromatic alterations that occur in Bartók's own music:

Ex.13: fragment of bagpipe piece from Cerbăl (Hunedoara), Rumania, played by Lazăr Lăscus; *RFM 1*, no.549.



Flute

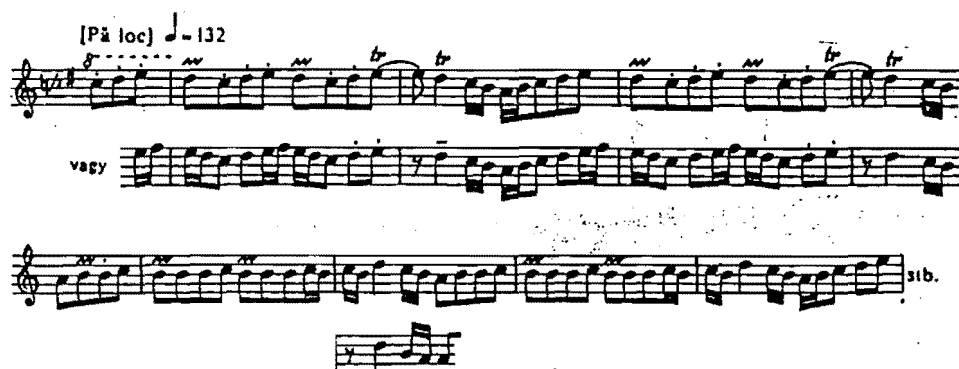
Bartók encountered four different types of flute in his folk music collections: peasant flute, long peasant flute, long peasant flute without fingerholes and double flute.³¹ When Bartók imitated flute music, however, it was an imitation of a general idiom rather than any specific type. The flute music he recorded in Hungary and Rumania usually has a *rubato* feel, even in the quick, dance tunes. The performer often has to crush together rapid runs of notes and gracenotes into a fast but fluctuating tempo. This feature is present in the flute piece cited in Ex.21 from Chapter 1, and to a certain extent in the piece following; the

³⁰ *RFM 1*, p.50.

³¹ They are described in detail in *RFM 1*, pp.17-19.

transcription, of course, cannot convey the hesitant, jerky tempo which combines with the plentiful ornamentation to produce a slightly rushed-sounding performance:³²

Ex.14: "Pa loc" for peasant flute from Torontal, Rumania; Lampert no.130 (*RFM 1*, no.183).



We can hear something of this capricious quality in the following recording of an Hungarian peasant dance piece:

TAPE EXAMPLE 4: M.H 3704a from Székelyhados, recorded 1914; Wallachian quick twirling dance played on the peasant flute; *Hungarian Folk Music Collected by Béla Bartók. Phonograph Cylinders*. ed. Bálint Sárosi, LPX 18069; side 2, 3d.

This type of performance is imitated by Bartók in the 'flute' episode from the finale of *PS*, as was shown on pp.91-2 of ch.1. 1. A feature of the flute's tone quality which we can hear in the above tape example is the raucous, distorted sound on the high notes; this is due to the player's need to use a tight embouchure and strong breath pressure in order to produce these notes. The ability of players to achieve these high notes varied, as Bartók noted. Some flute melodies are entirely based in a high register, giving them a shrill sound.

³² This melody is arranged by Bartók in *Rumanian Folk Dances* (1915), III, for piano; also in versions for piano and violin, and piano and 'cello. These versions are quite different to the original, not only in medium, but also in speed; Bartók's version is considerably slower in tempo than the original, creating a quite different character.

Violin

Considering the large amount of violin music Bartók wrote, we might have expected him to have been impressed by the rural violin music he heard. As we saw earlier, however, much of the folk violin music Bartók collected was played by gipsies and he was not generally fond of their performance methods. Nonetheless, he encountered a genuine peasant style of violin playing in isolated rural areas:³³

...in the poor Rumanian villages of the County of Maramureş music-making has passed from the hands of the native peasant bagpipers into those of the gipsies. Most of these gipsies fiddle the repertory they inherited from the pipers in a genuine peasant style, and one would look here in vain for augmented seconds (there is merely the scale $d^2 e^2 f\sharp^2 g\sharp^2 a^2 b^2 c^3$) or distorted rhythms. In the county of Bihor the gipsy fiddlers play with the same simplicity as their Rumanian peasant colleagues, and the same is true of the gipsies who live in the villages of the Hungarian backwoods. The nearer we come to cultural centres the greater the changes in the music-making of the gipsies.

Bartók's imitation of rural violin music from Rumania was discussed in Chapter 2, with regard to the dance-like finales of *VSI* and *Contrasts*. In several cases, the type of violin music Bartók imitates is, itself, an imitation of bagpipe music. Thus, the 'sound-world' of these passages is essentially the same as that of bagpipe music: vigorous, rough, intoxicating, loud and continuous. In the Introduction to *RFM 1*, Bartók says of the bagpipe imitations: "These are very enlightening inasmuch as they show which sound characteristics of certain instruments mainly capture the imagination of listeners."³⁴ Bartók's own imitations in the works under study demonstrate which sound-effects of the violin bagpipe-imitations he was impressed by most: the 'droning' on the open strings and the rapid, continuous, motivic melodic lines. The conjuring of the sound of the bagpipes via the violin is more directly seen in *Rhapsody No.2* for violin and piano. The second movement (*Friss*) contains settings of four bagpipe-imitations on rural violin. The fourth melody from this movement, in particular, is remarkable for its attempt to evoke the sound of the bagpipes,

³³ *BBE*, "Gipsy Music or Hungarian Music?", p.222.

³⁴ *RFM 1*, p.27.

and especially the characteristic high, 'squeaky' notes. In his arrangement of the melody, Bartók matches these with high-pitched 'squeaky' effects in the accompaniment:

Ex.15: Bartók, *Rhapsody No.2* for violin and orchestra, II, [14] - [15] b.3(ff).

The image displays two pages of a musical score for Bartók's *Rhapsody No. 2*. The left page shows measures 14 and 15, and the right page shows measures 16 and 17. The score is for a violin and orchestra arrangement. The left page includes parts for Flute I & II, Oboe I & II, Clarinet I & II, Bassoon I & II, Horn I & II, Trumpet I & II, Trombone I & II, Tuba, Euphonium, and Timp. The right page includes parts for Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Violoncello, Double Bass, and Piano. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *mf*, and *ff*. The tempo is marked *Allegro*. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

A further example of Bartók using the 'sound-world' of rural violin music occurs in the second movement of *Sonatina* for piano, entitled "Bear's Dance". This is an arrangement of a *Jocul Ursului* or "Bear's Dance" for violin which Bartók recorded in Maramureș. The

folk item is unusual in that it is based on the D and G strings of the violin rather than the upper strings. Bartók, himself, explains this in an interview from 1944: "This [folk piece] was played for me by a peasant violinist on the G and D strings: on the lower strings in order to have it more similar to a bear's voice. Generally the violin players use the E string."³⁵ This, again, shows Bartók's awareness of tone-quality in rural performance and its significance to the listeners.

It is notable that the opening theme of *VS1*, III, features a quasi-folk, violin melody played entirely on the G string (from bb.5-5, and the sign *8*). In Chapter 2 we found possible folk models for this melody in Bartók's Maramureş collection. Could it be that this melody is also imitating the low voice of a bear, as in the *jocul ursului* mentioned above? There are two main reasons that disqualify this possibility: first, it is unwise to make such a conclusion on the basis of one parallel in Bartók's folk collection, as other *jocul ursului* in the collection do not exploit the lower strings in the same way as the item above; second, the *jocul ursului* in Bartók's collection vary in tempo and character depending on the region and in most cases are not similar in style to the melody-type used in *VS1*. Therefore, Bartók's motivation for using the G string in this melody was probably not born from any direct experience of rural violin music. (Instead, it could have come from the quality of the Jelly Arányi's violin playing.)

Unfortunately, the only relevant examples available on tape are of Hungarian violin pieces collected in the 1930s and transcribed by Bartók's close associate, Jenő Deutsch, for the 'Patria Series'. Bartók, of course, will have heard these pieces, but chose not to transcribe them himself, probably because he was not present when they were first recorded. We cannot, then, make a direct comparison between the 'sound-world' of these pieces and tone-quality in folk music imitations from the works under study. However, these pieces do provide an example of a fairly typical rural, gipsy performance from Hungary:

³⁵ From a concert series entitled 'Ask the Composer', in the U.S.A., 1944. *Bartók Record Archive*, 'Notes', p.26.

Tape Example 5:

Hungarian violin pieces from Borsod, recorded 1937; from *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with Bartók's Transcriptions*, ed. Somfai, LPX 18058-60; side F.5a;

(a) transcription no.5 a,b

(b) transcription no.5 a,d

(c) transcription no.5 a,c

The special sound-effects such as *glissandi* and *pizzicato* are not features that Bartók viewed as typical of a genuine peasant performance. What he writes in the Introduction to *RFM I* would apply equally well in the example above: "*Pizzicato* and *glissando* are very seldom used, only by more "*distingué*" players and for the sake of humorous effects".³⁶ The big augmented second in Ex.5a is a gipsy mannerism which Bartók so frequently emphasized as being atypical of Hungarian folk music. The use of open strings in Ex.5c is, however, characteristic of peasant violin music, as are the runs of semiquaver figurations (especially in Ex.5b). There are also slight off-beat accents in Ex.5b and 5c; such accents are a feature of peasant violin playing, as we saw in Chapter 2.

Aside from the points mentioned so far, it is difficult to make direct parallels between tone-quality of the rural violinists Bartók recorded and the type of tone-quality he imagined when writing for violin in *VS1* and *Contrasts*. Naturally, it would have been impossible to recreate the peculiar 'sound-world' of rural violin performance in a concert work and this would not have been Bartók's intention, anyway. The same applies in Bartók's arrangements of folk songs; although some modification of vocal style is required of the concert singer, it would not be practical or desirable for her/him to mimic the sound of the original folk performance. While Bartók's music frequently contains elements in the score that suggest the imitation of rural performance peculiarities, it remains within an urban, educated music tradition and, therefore, the 'sound-world' is essentially different.

³⁶ *RFM I*, p.17.

The large amount of music Bartók wrote for the violin is due not to folk influences but to his association with a number of fine concert violinists. Arányi and Szigeti have been mentioned already in connection with *VSI* and *Contrasts*. In addition, there were Zoltán Székely, Imre Waldbauer, Stefi Geyer, Ede Zathureczky and André Gertler. The factor all these violinists had in common was their teacher: Jenő Hubay, himself a brilliant violinist. It is pertinent here to ask whether or not this 'school' of violinists had a significant effect on the way in which Bartók wrote for violin, and the type of 'sound-world' he imagined when composing *VSI* and *Contrasts*. Although this brief discussion has no relevance as regards folk music, it seems necessary for the sake of completeness.

In a dissertation on the technical and interpretative problems in Bartók's *Violin Sonatas*, Robert Groth does no more than broach the subject, giving a brief description of Hubay's performing style:³⁷

It also appears that, since all the violinists he concertized with were pupils of Hubay, some of the technical features of Bartók's violin parts might be influenced by Hubay's style of playing, which could be characterized as a powerful, Hungarian, rubato style tempered by French classicism.

The Polish violinist, Jan Tawroszewicz, owns a rare recording of Hubay performing early in this century. He describes Hubay's style of performance as being typical of its day; very romantic (in the context of present day practice), with extensive use of *portamento*, considerable *vibrato*, plus an enormous technical ability.³⁸ It is his opinion that the influence of Hubay on his violin pupils (such as Szigeti and Arányi) was strong. In the recordings of Szigeti and Székely playing Bartók's music, the warm romantic tone can certainly be discerned.³⁹ However, it is not excessively romantic to my ears. Szigeti's use of *portamento*, for instance, is restrained, as in the opening theme from *Contrasts*, II, where some of the intervals are joined by expressive slides. His general performance style

³⁷ Robert Groth Jr., *A Study of the Technical and Interpretative Problems Inherent in Bartók's Violin Sonatas*, Diss., 1971, p.8.

³⁸ In conversation with Jan Tawroszewicz, 1986. (The recording of Hubay playing was unfortunately unavailable at the time of the conversation.)

³⁹ See *Bartók at the Piano*, ed. László Somfai and Zoltán Kocsis.

in this work is quite refined and economical. In the recording of *Rumanian Folk Dances*, Székely's tone does not seem so rich as Szigeti's, with a less pronounced *vibrato*. Perhaps this was partly due to playing authentic folk music rather than an abstract work of Bartók's.

There is no recording of Jelly Arányi performing in this collection. Robert Anderson speaks of the "warmth and freedom of her playing" and her "fine technique" plus "gypsy fire". He adds that "...her rhapsodic style suited ...Bartók's two violin and piano sonatas and Ravel's *Tzigane* ...".⁴⁰ It would seem from this and other descriptions that Arányi's playing owed something to the romantic quality in Hubay's style, and that Bartók had it in mind when composing *VS1* for Arányi. In the first theme of the first movement, for instance, the melodic line is very idiomatic for such a romantic violin style, with sweeping bowed gestures and passionately intoned long notes. It seems tailor-made for the type of violinist Arányi must have been (despite the unconventional pitch content). Much of the writing for violin in this movement exhibits the same features. In the finale, however, the performance style is perhaps more closely associated with the folk character of the themes.

As the author is not a violinist and only superficially acquainted with the playing style of the violinists for whom Bartók wrote, the discussion above is only tentative. However, in an essay written about the slow movement from Bartók's *Violin Concerto 1937-38*, written for Székely, László Somfai's expert opinion is that the solo violin part was conceived in "...the special style of a whole range of illustrious Hubay pupils, as the *idiomatic* formulation of a composer well aware of their capabilities...".⁴¹ If this is true for the *Violin Concerto*, then it would also seem likely to be true for other works of Bartók's written for these violinists. Somfai adds that the Hubay style "...should be considered not so much as a stimulus for Bartók's invention as rather a performing condition which considerably facilitates the authentic performance".⁴² This would probably also apply to *Contrasts*. In the case of *VS1*, however, there is much of the violin writing that could

⁴⁰ Robert Anderson's entry under "Arányi, Jelly", *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, v.1, p.542. *Tzigane* was also written especially for Arányi.

⁴¹ László Somfai, "Strategies of Variation", *op. cit.*, p.193.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.193.

possibly have resulted from the direct inspiration of Arányi's playing. If McLeod's account in the 'Historical Background' is to be believed, then *VS1* was composed specifically with Arányi's style and personality in mind. This view is supported by Bartók's initial insistence that he play the work with Aranyi only.

All this leads us to conclude that the 'sound-world' in *VS1* (in the first and second movements at least) is probably more indebted to Arányi's style than to experience of rural violin performance. The romantic tonal quality implicit in the violin part is almost the antithesis of the harder, 'straighter' tone of Bartók's quasi-folk pieces or authentic folk music arrangements.

Percussion

Percussion instruments were a rarity in the East European folk music Bartók collected.⁴³ However, his collection of Arabic folk music from Biskra in North Africa contained a large number of items that included drums. As we saw in the Introduction, the drums accompanied the melody line which could be vocal or instrumental. The rhythmic patterns produced on the drums seem to have impressed Bartók as he imitated them on several occasions.⁴⁴ Likewise, he is likely to have enjoyed the vigorous, pulsating performance and the exciting 'sound-world' that resulted. Such percussive sound-effects are not uncommon in Bartók's own music. In the works under study, we can find examples of this in the following passages: *VS1*, III, the rondo theme statements, *PS*, I, theme 1 and recurrences of this theme, *PS*, III, the transitory passages in bb.38-53 and 81-91, and other linking or 'rounding-off' sections not involving the quasi-folk tune. In the works of his late period (1937-1945), Bartók seems to have become less interested in purely percussive

⁴³ See, for example, RFM 1, pp.26-7.

⁴⁴ See pp.551-2 for an example of Arabic drum rhythms.

effects; *Contrasts* does not contain them, unless we include the vigorous coda in the third movement. It is particularly in music for piano that Bartók developed his percussive style.

In the same year as he completed *PS*, Bartók also composed "Tambourine" (no.8 from *Nine Little Piano Pieces*) in which the piano imitates drumming.⁴⁵ Likewise, in "The Chase" from *Out of Doors* the piano takes on the role of a percussion instrument. However, we cannot attribute these examples of the percussive style directly to the influence of Arabic drumming, unless there are other specific features of Arabic folk music present (such as narrow, chromatic scale patterns). There are other possible sources which we must take account of, most notably the music of Stravinsky (especially works such as *The Rite of Spring* and *Les Noces*). Therefore, it would be wrong to point to the influence of Arabic drumming in the opening theme of *PS*, I, because there are no specific characteristics of Arabic melody or rhythm present. Nonetheless, this drumming gave Bartók a precedent in folk music for his percussive style.

Tape Example 6: Arabic piece for *rcheita* and *Tabbal* (drums); no.17c from the Budapest Archive tape collection; see transcription no.50, *Tuggurt-i boka-d-len* from Bartók's essay "A Biskra-vidéki arabok népzeneje" (see ch.2, Ex.27a).

MISTAKE-IMITATIONS

One of the features of both peasant vocal and instrumental performance only mentioned in passing is the presence of irregularities of pitch which appear to be mistakes. To summarise, Bartók writes about uncertain intonation and unstable pitches in *HFS* (with regard to West-Hungarian songs, as we saw in Chapter 1), *RFM 1* (with regard to violinists and bagpipers), *RFM 2* (with regard to the songs, generally, and those from Bihar specifically), *RFM 4* and *RFM 5* (with regard to the poor intonation of gipsy violinists).⁴⁶ Aside from uncertain intonation, we have also seen two other 'accidental'

⁴⁵ See ch.2, pp.180.

⁴⁶ *HFS*, p.18; *RFM 1*, pp.16, 21-2; *RFM 2*, p.36; *RFM 4*, p.18, *RFM 5*, p.43. There may well be other comments of Bartók's on this subject in his Introductions to the collections of Slovakian, Arabic and Yugoslav folk musics.

effects: octave transposition in the middle of songs and consecutive fifths on the violin.

Another from Rumanian folk music is described by Bartók, thus:⁴⁷

...a considerable number of the singers either seem to have no correct notion about the melody and its structure or are totally careless about it. They may begin the melody at a wrong point, with the second or third section, and may terminate it in the same way. This is a fortuitously-characterized procedure from which no system can be deduced.

Sometimes effects that seem accidental are, in fact, an idiosyncratic part of the peasant's performance. For example, the fractional rhythmic deviations Bartók initially ignored in his Rumanian collection were eventually found to be deliberate 'Bulgarizations' of the rhythm.⁴⁸ The folk music Bartók knew of was, by its very nature, elastic in rhythm and pitch, with no two performances of the same item being the same.

Bartók transcribed every detail of performance, including what were apparently mistakes. According to Kodály, Bartók's transcriptions came the closest to representing the folk music performance without resorting to mechanical means.⁴⁹ A glance at Bartók's revised transcriptions (in the Rumanian volumes, for instance) shows us his concern for microscopic details. It is worth remembering, however, that this method of transcription was developed gradually, the revised versions appearing in the 1930s. The earlier, more basic type of transcription is exemplified in Lampert's collection of Bartók's folk music sources used in his arrangements.⁵⁰

Bartók's precision in transcription is reflected in the notation of his scores. For example, from 1930 onwards, he inserted the exact durations (to the nearest second) of movements and sections of the movements in the score. The first section of the first movement of *Contrasts* is timed at one minute and eighteen seconds, the second section at

⁴⁷ *RFM* 2, p.36.

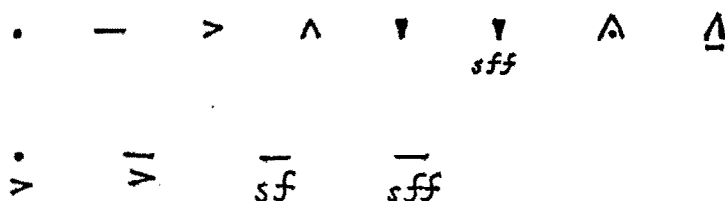
⁴⁸ *BBE*, "The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm" (1938), p.44-5.

⁴⁹ Somfai, 'Notes' to *Hungarian Folk Music*. *Gramophone Records with Bartók's Transcriptions*.

⁵⁰ See Lampert *Bartók Népdal Feldolgozásainak Forrásjegyzéke* [The source-catalogue of the folk song arrangements of Bartók.].

one minute and seventeen seconds, and so on.⁵¹ Bartók was also meticulous about tempo indications in the score although this dates back to well before 1930. *VS1* is a good example; the first movement, for instance, contains no less than forty-five metronome indications. This work also shows Bartók's concern for extremely detailed articulation. In the third movement, for instance, the piano part includes the following range of touches:⁵²

Ex.16 : Articulation in the piano part of *VS1*, III.



When transcribing irregularities or 'mistakes' in folk music Bartók wrote *sic* alongside the note(s) concerned to assure the reader he, himself, had not made an error. *Sic* appears in the early transcriptions as well as the revised ones; Nos.61b,106, 243b, 335, 404 and 777 from *RFM 1* include examples of its use. This indication also occurs twice in Bartók's original compositions. The first occasion is in the slow movement of *Violin Concerto No.2*, in b.35, where the normal melodic line of the harp is disturbed so as to avoid descending below the solo violin part.⁵³ The second occasion is in the first movement of *Contrasts*, in b.81, under the clarinet part, reassuring the performer that F#-B⁴ is

⁵¹ According to Szigeti, Bartók stated that the durations only signified the time it took for Bartók, himself, to play the piece through. See *With Strings Attached: Reminiscences and Reflections* by József Szigeti. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947. p.129. The reasons for Bartók beginning to publish the durations concern faulty metronome speeds; they are outlined in the 'Notes' to *Bartók at the Piano 1920-1945 Gramophone records, Piano rolls, Live recordings* ed. László Somfai and Zoltán Kocsis, p.29.

⁵² The articulation in *PS* and other works of this time is less detailed. Perhaps in his effort to simplify and clarify his style, Bartók also tried to 'unclutter' his scores by reducing the amount of performance detail. His notation can still be exacting in *PS*, however, as for instance in the first movement, bb.135-155 with regard to dynamics, and bb.156-171 with regard to articulation and dynamics.

⁵³ László Somfai "Strategies of Variation in the Second Movement of the Violin Concerto 1937-38", *Studia Musicologica* v.19, 1977, p.198.

intended, rather than the expected G-C (thus doubling the violin). It is, indeed, peculiar that this rising fourth is written a minor second apart. Previous to this moment, a long melody line is played by the clarinet and violin in unison or two octaves apart:

Ex.17 : Contrasts, I, full score, bb.72-81.

Più mosso, $\text{♩} = 104$

pp

Più mosso, $\text{♩} = 104$

pp, legatissimo

(72a)

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

Tempo I. ($\text{♩} = 96$)

mf, dolce

p, dolce

Tempo I. ($\text{♩} = 96$)

pp

poco

f (rit)

As well as disturbing the consistent unison or octave doubling, the *sic!* -motive also upsets the normal rhythmic flow; compare this off-beat rhythm with the rhyming on-beat cadence in b.79. It is as if the performers had temporarily lost their place and made a late entry, the clarinettist playing wrong notes, as well. Bartók appears to have written in a mistake, possibly for self-ironic reasons. When writing the parts of the *Violin Concerto No.2*, a year before *Contrasts*, Bartók made accidental mistakes in the transposition of the clarinet and horn parts and, therefore, the *sic!* in *Contrasts* may be a reference to this.⁵⁴

Although this written-in mistake may seem like a special occurrence and fairly insignificant, there are other similar effects in Bartók's music and the works under study, in particular, without the indication *sic*. The very first bar of *PS* (and b.7, also), for instance, contains a fleeting semitonal clash which, in the context, seems like a mistake:

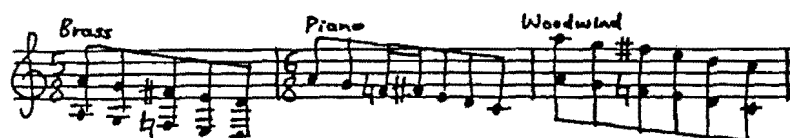
Ex.18: *PS*, I, bb.1 and 7.



⁵⁴ In conversation with László Somfai, 1984.

This semitonal clash is later developed into cluster chords, via three strettis (bb.217-8, 222-4), but the effect of the above, at the beginning of the movement, is that of a 'smudged' note. A similar clash occurs in the first movement of *Piano Concerto No.1*, although this time it is 'prepared':

Ex.19: *Piano Concerto No.1*, I, bb.5-3[40].



In theme 2 of *PS*, I, the pattern of consecutive double thirds in the melody line is broken on three, separate occasions. Likewise, the recapitulation of this theme also includes breakages in the pattern:⁵⁵

Ex.20: *PS*, I, extracts from theme 2.



⁵⁵ The omission of G^b in the left hand, Ex.20, is not for any technical reason; this G would be quite playable for a pianist of Bartók's calibre.

Another 'odd' passage in this movement is the lead-in to theme 4. The pattern of thirds is again broken for just one beat in the left hand, while the right hand has a cramped ornamental figure:

Ex.21: *PS*, I, bb.74-6.



It is the author's hypothesis that Bartók often drew his inspiration for these kinds of 'mistakes' from his experience of folk music performance. Therefore, such instances in his music might be labelled 'mistake-imitations'. It has already been noted how fastidious Bartók was at transcribing any peculiarities in peasant performance. The following example provides a proof of his concern with these 'rough edges'; Bartók's transcription of a Rumanian folk piece for violin is shown first, followed by his arrangement (of the melody line) in *Rhapsody No.1* for violin:⁵⁶

Ex.22: (a) Violin piece from Timiş, Rumania; *RFM I*, no.404.



M. F. 1746 c., Ghilad (Timiş), *Pătrău* (ca 60), II. 1912.

Cf. Vol. II. N° 385.

⁵⁶ The fluctuations shown in this revised transcription are not, however, shown in Bartók's original transcription. See Lampert, no.224. This does not necessarily mean, however, that Bartók was not aware of these fluctuations when he wrote *Rhapsody No.1*.

(b) Bartók's setting of the violin piece above; the solo violin line from *Rhapsody No.1*, II, [1]-[3].



In Ex.22(a), the seventh degree of the scale (G) is usually sharp in intonation. When it is a 'true' G[♯], however, Bartók marks the note with *sic* to indicate it is not his error but an idiosyncrasy of the melody. The ambiguity of this pitch remains throughout the two 'verses'. In Bartók's arrangement, he maintains the ambiguity by making the seventh degree natural (A[♯]) in the first half and sharp (A[♯]) in the second half. Bartók provides the explanation as to why the seventh degree is mostly sharp in the folk piece:⁵⁶ "The minor-second interval [F[♯]-G in Ex.22a] is mostly too wide; this is due more to the width of the player's fingers than to any intention, because the player simply cannot manage to place his fingers close enough together." Hence, in his arrangement of the melody in Ex.21, Bartók is willing to integrate accidental features of folk music such as fluctuations of intonation. This is analogous to his integration of unstable degrees of the scale in West-Hungarian folk music into his arrangements and original compositions, which we saw in Chapter 1. However, Bartók did not always attempt to imitate the unstable pitches of folk music; in the following arrangement of a *colinde*, for example, he simply opts for one form of the scale degree, maintaining the characteristic augmented second between A[♯] and G (analogous to A[♯] and G[♭] in the transcription):

⁵⁶*RFM* 1, p.16.

Ex.23 : Rumanian *colinde*; Lampert no.147.

(b) Bartók's arrangement of the tune above, in *Colinde*, II, no.3.

3. Andante. ($\text{♩} = 80$)

sempre p dolce legato

There are other types of 'rough edges' in folk music which Bartók faithfully transcribed. An example occurs in one of the bagpipe pieces we heard earlier on tape; Bartók's transcription of this piece shows how he notates notes or groups of notes which would seem to be unintentional, probably caused by technical faults in the instrument:

Ex.24: Hungarian bagpipe piece; Bartók's transcription of tape example 3(b), from *Hungarian Folk Music. Gramophone Records with Bartók's Transcriptions*.



There are countless other examples of this sort of 'mistake' in peasant performance to be seen in Bartók's transcriptions. It must be noted here, however, that Bartók's revised transcriptions of the 1930s are considerably more detailed and accurate than his earlier ones and are more likely to include such 'mistakes'. He was undoubtedly aware of them from an early stage though, as we can see from his efforts to notate pitches that wavered from the true intonation - for example, the quarter-tone key signature in the transcription of a *colinde*

in Ex.23 above, written in the early 1920s.⁵⁷ There are also Bartók's comments in *HFS* (1924) about the unstable degrees in Transdanubian folk song.⁵⁸

Therefore, the type of ambiguity of pitch in Bartók's music seen in Exs.18-20 seems likely to be a reference to the intonation peculiarities of folk music. In this way, such moments could be viewed as 'mistake-imitations' (even though many peculiarities in folk music are intentional and can hardly be called mistakes). A parallel can be made between Bartók's 'mistake-imitations' and the 'blue' notes in jazz piano music, where major and minor thirds, fifths, sixths and sevenths are played simultaneously in an attempt to imitate the quarter-tones (and micro-tones) of Negro singers and jazz instrumentalists.⁵⁹

The examples of 'mistake-imitations' in Bartók's music we have seen so far come from *PS, I* and *Piano Concerto No.1*. Several more examples can be found in the works under study, and are listed below:

⁵⁷ In the revised version of this transcription, Bartók notates the third degree as an ordinary flat rather than $a\flat/2$. See *RFM* 4, no.10a.

⁵⁸ See ch.1, p.71.

⁵⁹ This is not the only parallel that can be made, of course. The 'false relations' between major and minor degrees of the diatonic scale are imbedded in many composers' styles previous to Bartók, the English sixteenth-century 'madrigalists' and the nineteenth-century Nationalists to name but two 'groups' or eras of composers.

PS, I: bb.104, 106, II: bb.23, 40, III: bb.77, 212. All these are examples of unexpected octave displacements and/or octave doublings of the melody line. The precedent in folk music for octave transpositions is the frequent occurrence of this technique in songs, as described on p.229.

PS, III: bb.144, 146, 150: odd clashes between the 'flute' melody and the inner-part that doubles this melody (in the right hand), as explained on p.268 and Ex.26.

Contrasts, I: discrepancies in pitch between melody and harmony in bb.16-29, possibly imitating a gipsy band, as was described in Chapter 3, pp.212-15. Similar such pitch discrepancies occur in the middle section; e.g. bb.33 (beat 4), 37 (beat 2), 39 (beat 4), and also the irregular rhythmic grouping of the clarinet in b.44. The gracenotes in the clarinet part in bb.45 and 47 seem oddly inconsistent compared with the regularity with which they occur in the violin part in bb.45-53.

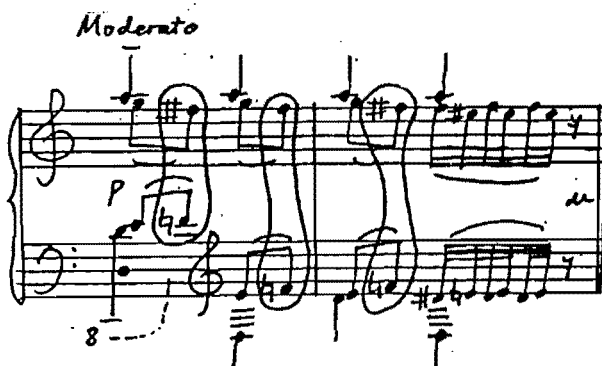
Contrasts, II: b.15, sequential pitch-pattern broken by the written D in the clarinet (sounding as B ; see ch.6) - possibly an error in transcription.

Contrasts, III: mistuned violin at the beginning, imitating a poorly tuned rural violin (see ch.2).

VS1, III: 2 b.7, unexpected interpolation of a 5/8 bar, reflecting the frequent occurrence of irregular rhythms and metric disturbances in Hungarian & Rumanian instrumental folk music.

In addition to this list, we could add the aborted bagpipe episode from *PS*, III, which is full of semitonal clashes that seem designed to imitate the modal alterations and rough, approximate intonational qualities of the East European bagpipes. The opening idea, for instance, features a clash between the major and minor third degree. As well as being a typical pitch simultaneity in Bartók's harmonic language, it reflects the unstable nature of the third degree in many bagpipe pieces in Bartók's collection. This is well exemplified in the bagpipe piece from Ex.13 from the present chapter.

Ex.25: Extract from the aborted bagpipe episode from *PS*, III.



The type of chromaticism that occurs in the above is more pronounced and deliberate than would be encountered in an authentic bagpipe piece. Characteristically, Bartók exaggerates the effect to stress the point of his folk music imitation, and also to satisfy his own compositional needs.

When investigating possible 'mistake-imitations', it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between these and other characteristic techniques of Bartók's, especially his tendency to constantly vary the material. As we shall see in Part Two, variation can occur on the smallest of levels. In *Contrasts*, III, bb.40-8, for instance, the changing scalar patterns are due to the variational process rather than being 'mistake-imitations'. A second area of difficulty concerns the differentiation between clashes of pitch that seem like mistakes and clashes of pitch that arise from the characteristic use of bimodality, or 'mistuning' (discussed in the 'Review of Literature'). The clashes in theme 2 of *PS*, I, shown in Ex.20, undoubtedly qualify as 'mistake-imitations', but in the recapitulation of this theme, other semitonal clashes occur as a result of a bimodal (or even trimodal) combination of parts.⁶¹ It is because these clashes occur with regularity and according to a pattern that they do not sound unexpected or unintentional. Likewise, the bimodal clashes in *Contrasts*, I, bb.38-42 are to be distinguished from the pitch discrepancies summarised in the list above, which occur in the same section.

'Mistake-imitations' are symptomatic of the spontaneous, improvisational quality in Bartók's music. In Chapter 3, we saw how the first movement of *Contrasts* seemingly integrated improvisational features of gipsy bands, with disparities between melody and harmony. In Chapter 1, we saw the improvisational effects of instrumental folk music woven into the variations on a quasi-folk tune, in the finale of *PS*. The 'violin' version (bb. 205-14) features a phrase that is varied in an almost random manner, the octave displacement in b.212 being suggestive of a 'mistake-imitation'.⁶² Compare this with the original version

⁶¹ See bb.161-75 of *PS*, III; also see ch.5 for an analysis of this passage.

⁶² See ch.1, Ex.23.

in the second draft of this episode, where the 'violin' follows the tune in the 'correct' manner, and without octave displacements. The improvisational aspect of the final version captures the spirit of instrumental folk music in a more authentic way than the original. In the 'flute' version (bb.143-53), erratic rhythmic patterns and minute melodic variations convey the impression of improvisation. The inner-part provides a simplified doubling of the main melody line but also frequently clashes with it, another example of 'mistake-imitations':

Ex.26: *PS*, III, right hand, bb.143-53.



The bagpipe episode from the second draft (and later, from "Musettes" in *Out of Doors*) has an even greater sense of improvisation, being built on melodic motives that are repeated and varied in a free manner. In b.80 of "Musettes" Bartók writes "*due o tre volte ad libit*" [repeated two or three times, at the player's choosing] over one of these motives.

Bartók's rhythmic flexibility partly derives from the same quality he found in folk music.⁶³ In instrumental folk music, for instance, the performers will sometimes disturb the regular metre or pulse by adding or omitting a beat, whether accidentally or intentionally. This can be seen in a Ruthenian violin piece from Maramureş which Bartók arranged in *Rhapsody No.2* for violin and piano, cited in Ex.20 of Chapter 2. In this instance, the added beats appear to be intentional as the occurrence in line 1 is repeated in line 3. A more extreme example of this type of rhythmic flexibility can be seen in Ex.40 in Chapter 2; here, the irregularities seem more likely to be the result of haste on the performer's part, rather than any deliberate intention. In *VS1*, III, a similar sort of rhythmic irregularity appears in

⁶³ This point is discussed in greater detail in ch.8.

b.2,7, where the steady 2/4 is briefly disturbed by 5/8. In [18] b.5- [21] b.10, the interruptions of 2/4 are more frequent but still create the impression of improvisation. These sorts of rhythmic changes are different to the more consistent changes we often find in Bartók's music. The changing metres in the rondo theme from *PS*, III, for example, are not in this 'improvisational' category.

Like the idea of the peasant 'sound-world', the idea of Bartók integrating the irregularities of folk music into his own works, in short, 'mistake-imitations', is elusive and difficult to prove. It almost requires an immersion in the folk music on our part just as Bartók had. Perhaps some of the seemingly strange and inexplicable occurrences in his music can be understood in the light of his own willingness to accept the peculiarities of folk music. It may seem paradoxical that the spontaneously original and improvisational elements of a lot of his music may well be attributed in genesis to his fastidiously careful observation of peasant performance but there is enough evidence to make this a possibility. If we accept this thesis, we may move a little closer to an appreciation of not only the nature of Bartók's style but also the means by which his creative urge functioned.